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Security Council

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Tuesday, 14 May 2002, 10.45 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Mahbubani	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Williamson

Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, 27 April-7 May 2002 (S/2002/537).

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02-38127 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, 27 April-7 May 2002 (S/2002/537)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa and Spain, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi), Mr. Atoki (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Mr. Gasana (Rwanda), Mr.Kumalo (South Africa) and Mr. Arias (Spain) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/537, containing the report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, from 27 April to 7 May 2002. Members also have before them photocopies of the addendum to the report, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

I call on Mr. Jean-David Levitte, Head of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region.

Mr. Levitte (France)(spoke in French): The members of the Council have before them the report of the third Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region. I believe that we may be able to use this meeting to reflect on the significance of our mission.

In 10 days we met with 8 heads of State, the leaders of several rebel movements - Congolese and Burundian — many leaders of political parties and representatives of civil society. We conducted this new mission at the request of the parties themselves, in a spirit of real partnership between the Security Council and the parties to two African Agreements — the Lusaka Agreement and the Arusha Agreement — to achieve peace in the Great Lakes region and security for all the countries of the region, and primarily for the future of the peoples concerned — the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the people of Burundi.

Let us recall that between 2 and 3 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself have fallen victim, directly or indirectly, to the war in the Great Lakes region, a conflict that has lasted for more than three years. There have also been mass violations of human rights, a disastrous humanitarian situation and the plundering of resources. What struck us in hearing the representatives of civil society everywhere was their unanimous message regarding the withdrawal of all foreign troops, the political and administrative unity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Burundi and the need for a halt to the plundering of natural resources, which must belong to the people of the countries concerned.

This was our third mission in two years. It was an opportunity to examine the ground covered in that period to unravel the complicated aspects of this crisis. The ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is holding along the disengagement line, even though there is fighting in the most eastern part of the country, where there are many civilian victims.

Secondly, the disengagement line is being fully respected, even though there are still certain positions to be corrected here and there. It is urgent that the parties implement the commitments that they themselves have made. Thirdly, the withdrawal of foreign armed forces has been completed by Namibia. Uganda and Angola are fully engaged in this process. Zimbabwe has begun, and no withdrawal by Rwanda has been confirmed by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

Fourthly, the inter-Congolese dialogue has made remarkable progress in Sun City, and we should pay tribute to the facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire, to President Thabo Mbeki and, above all, to the Congolese participants themselves, who unanimously adopted 37 texts, which constitute an excellent base for a transition of two or three years towards democratic elections.

The Government and the Mouvement pour la libération du Congo (MLC) concluded an agreement on the political formula for this transition period. It was signed by 80 per cent of the participants at Sun City, but it has not been accepted by the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Goma (RCD-Goma), which has created an alliance with a certain number of political parties.

So, you can see that there is undeniable progress. However, at the same time, there is still a long way to go. Therefore, the objective of our mission was to make some progress in the main areas of the peace process.

Our first recommendation following this mission is the absolute need strictly to respect the ceasefire. Today, nothing can justify a violation of the ceasefire. Those who might take the initiative of restarting the fighting, must know that they would be condemned in the severest terms by a unanimous Security Council.

Secondly, with respect to the inter-Congolese dialogue, the Security Council wants an inclusive agreement that leaves no one on the sidelines. We believe that the negotiations that we got going again among the three signatories of the Lusaka Agreement during the meeting in Luanda must be followed by further meetings, which must be held in a spirit of openness and without preconditions.

It seems to us that that there really remains very little to discuss in order to reach an agreement. It is a question of finding the formula that will make it possible during two or three years to govern the Democratic Republic of the Congo and guide it towards democratic elections. However, the little that remains is still quite sensitive because it involves the distribution of posts. That is why we recommend that the dialogue be held in a spirit of discretion, which will make it possible to bring the positions closer together. I repeat, it must be done without preconditions and in a spirit of openness. It is possible, and the parties must make progress in this direction. The Security Council will have to encourage anything that can help the parties to come together. We will discuss this again in our consultations at the end of the week.

Failing this, there is a risk that we would have to envisage a partition for an undetermined period. One thinks of Cyprus. I must say that there is a great difference between Cyprus and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Cyprus, the populations of the two sides of the island do not wish to live together. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, quite to the contrary, there is a unanimous will on the part of all the Congolese to be united, which struck all members of the Security Council. Nonetheless, there is a risk of a division of the country into two antagonistic areas. This is of concern to us because we are committed to the search for peace and security for the Congo and its region.

My third message relates to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the combatants, the former Forces armées rwandaises (ex-FAR) and the Rwandan Interahamwe. We must be careful to fully take into consideration the security concerns of Rwanda. We noted with satisfaction the solemn commitment made before the Security Council by President Kabila, a commitment under which his Government is not now helping and will not help the ex-FAR and Interahamwe groups. The wish was expressed that MONUC should verify that commitment.

Likewise, President Kabila expressed to us his determination to transfer to the Tribunal in Arusha those guilty of genocide, appearing on the list of the Tribunal and possibly residing on Congolese soil. I will mention to members of the Council that I received a telephone call from Adama Dieng, the Registrar of the Tribunal, who received a letter from the Congolese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. She Okitundu, inviting him to return to Kinshasa in order to establish cooperation on the ground with a view to transferring those guilty of genocide that might be on Congolese soil.

During our stay in Kinshasa, we destroyed 1000 weapons by fire. We want to see the process of the voluntary disarmament of 1,800 Rwandan combatants that began in Kamina be followed by their voluntary repatriation as soon as possible.

Finally, MONUC, represented here by Mr. Ngongi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-

General, is determined to undertake phase III of its work with the deployment towards the east, which will make it possible to come much closer to the ex-FAR and Interahamwe groups in order to disarm them on a voluntary basis and to repatriate them to Rwanda.

The fourth aspect of the situation is the withdrawal of foreign forces from Congolese soil. That withdrawal must be fully completed with reciprocal movements as provided for in the Lusaka Agreement. In order to take into account the security concerns of three countries neighbouring the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, the Council put forward an idea that, it seems to us, is likely to render service to the parties themselves: the idea of a "curtain" of troops. I will reiterate the terms of that idea as we presented them to our interlocutors. In the framework of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and as the last phase of the withdrawal of foreign troops from the countries concerned, it would involve the presence of troops from the neighbouring country on Congolese soil, for a limited time period and over a limited space, along the borders: for example, a curtain of Rwandan troops on Congolese soil, along the border with Rwanda. Those troops would, for a limited period and over a limited area, be there to work with Congolese troops and — why not, if the parties so request? — with the contribution of MONUC observers and possibly African contingents. This would be the last stage before complete withdrawal. This would be done to create a spirit of cooperation and trust between neighbouring countries that are destined to live side by side in a spirit of cooperation that would be gradually built between them in order to ensure the security of all.

That proposal was overall positively received by the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, first of all, but also by the three heads of State of the countries concerned: President Museveni, President Buyoya and President Kagame. Once again, let me say that this is just an idea and that it is now up to the parties themselves to work on it and to see whether they want to follow up on it.

To conclude my comments on what Ambassador Greenstock termed the triangle of these three situations, let me say that our concern is to see to it that the three sides of the triangle — the Government in Kinshasa, the disarmament of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe groups, and the withdrawal of the troops — all are moving towards a global solution.

We can see that progress has been made, and we must continue to work in that direction. That is the thrust of our proposals.

These three aspects are interrelated. Let me give an example: Rwanda tells us that its concern is security — that security is its only concern. If it finds a solution, we will withdraw all of our troops. Thus far, Rwanda has adopted a strategy of advancing 600 kilometres within the Congo in order to resolve the problem on its own. But Rwanda has acknowledged that this strategy is not working, since it is asking us to implement another strategy — that of the disarmament of ex-FAR and Interahamwe groups. Therefore we would express to Rwanda our conviction that, if a government of national unity can be established in Kinshasa, that will help Rwanda to resolve its problem, because, as I have said, President Kabila has expressed his determination to prevent the provision of any assistance to the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Bemba has expressed to us his determination to resolve this problem once and for all, and it goes without saying that the leaders of the RCD-Goma have the same intention. Therefore the establishment of a transitional government of national unity in Kinshasa is, objectively speaking, a means of helping Rwanda to deal with its security problem.

Secondly, MONUC will be able to act effectively if it has in Kinshasa a government that represents the unity of the Congo and that is determined to help MONUC observers and contingents accomplish their task of disarming the ex-FAR. Thus we can see that there certainly is a link between the establishment of a government of national unity in Kinshasa, the effective disarmament of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe groups, and the necessary withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Congo.

We want to use that triangle to create the dynamics of peace. I believe that this is the profound meaning of our action, and that this is the very core of what the Security Council wants to accomplish in the service of peace in the Great Lakes region.

I might add that one thorny issue remains as far as the Council is concerned: the question of Kisangani. We went there, and I think that I can accurately convey the aspirations of civil society in Kisangani. The people of Kisangani want the withdrawal of all troops that are present in the city and in its environs. They want the complete demilitarization of the city, and they

want the reopening of the river to commercial traffic, as announced, to become a reality. The agreement was signed by the Kinshasa Government, the MLC and the RCD–Goma. None of the parties must be able to prevent the reopening of the river to commercial traffic. MONUC must be able to assist in the resumption of trade, as the lives of millions of Congolese are at stake. The commitments undertaken must be implemented: the speedy and complete demilitarization of Kisangani and the reopening of the river to commercial traffic.

The relaunching of the economy has begun. During our stay, the Director-General of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was in Kinshasa, and I want to welcome the presence in this Chamber of representatives of the World Bank and of the IMF. It is a good thing for us to be able to listen to each other and understand each other, so that the efforts made on one side can complement the efforts made on the other. The relaunching of the economies must show the peoples of the region that progress towards peace will bring with it peace dividends.

We gave all the heads of State of the region a non-paper expressing the views of the Council on an idea that is not new — that of holding an international conference in the Great Lakes region — in order to show them that we envisaging prospects of cooperation among neighbouring countries whose future is to work together for peace, for mutual security, and for integrated economic development.

In order to follow up on all of this, we suggest a follow-up mechanism, the terms of which remain to be specified. Since the Council has the useful habit of visiting the region once a year, and since our partners from the Political Committee in Lusaka also come here to see us once a year, in the fall, then it seems to us that it is necessary that on a day-by-day basis there also be close follow-up. That is why the recommendation contained in our report is being made.

These are my comments on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On the subject of Burundi, I think that I can be quite brief. We met with all of the authorities of the country, and we noted first of all that considerable progress has been made since our visit last year. Indeed, the transition has begun; it is a reality now. We met with all of those involved.

Yet the peace process in Burundi also remains fragile. There are three messages: first, the cessation of hostilities. The two armed groups with which we met in Pretoria — the Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (FDD) and Forces nationales pour la Liberation (FNL) — must hear our message. Nothing can justify the continuation of hostilities. The fighting must come to an end. There is an urgent need for those movements to go to the negotiating table.

A regional summit is being envisaged in a few weeks. Our Council should maintain a intensive dialogue with the leaders of Burundi and of the region in order to achieve that necessary cessation of hostilities, to which we all aspire.

Secondly, the implementation of reforms during this transition period is indispensable - with or without a ceasefire — within the limits of the military situation. Specific reforms are provided for under the Arusha Agreement. The Security Council is determined to see that the authorities of the transition period, each one in its sphere of competence — be it the presidency, the Government or the two Assemblies – accomplish all of the reforms that have been stipulated, insofar as possible.

Lastly, and I say this in the presence of the representatives of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, all of our Burundian interlocutors — the leaders, the political parties and civil society — have insisted strongly and with unity on the need for urgent economic assistance. They all want the pledges made at the Paris and Geneva conferences to be fulfilled without delay. The Security Council supports these requests, because it is aware of the link between peace dividends and the success of the peace process.

If the population in Burundi sees that the transition that has been established, and that may be exemplary, does not lead to a cease-fire, or to reform, or to economic progress, then we have reason to fear the serious consequences of disillusion, the first elements of which are already appearing.

A last conclusion and recommendation on Burundi concerns the Arusha Agreement follow-up committee, which has been repatriated from Arusha to Bujumbura. The paradox of the present situation is that last year there was a representative of the Secretary-General, Jean Arnaud, permanently residing in Bujumbura. Today, the committee has been repatriated to Bujumbura, but there is no representative living in

Bujumbura. We know the specific reasons explaining the current situation, but we recommend that the Secretary-General find a solution in accordance with the modalities that he decides to set forth.

In conclusion, there has been slow but undeniable progress since the Council committed itself to the Great Lakes region. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo as in Burundi progress towards peace is well under way, but the progress is still fragile. The peace process in the two countries has not yet become irreversible. The commitment of the international community therefore must remain constant and strong. The role of MONUC is in all areas positive. I want to avail myself of this meeting to pay tribute to MONUC, which, in difficult circumstances, is accomplishing remarkable work. Our own commitment in the Security Council must remain constant in a partnership with all the countries of the region, be they the signatories of the Lusaka Agreement or the countries of the regional initiative on Burundi.

I would like to thank all Council members, because I believe that what we have accomplished in those 10 days was real teamwork. I would like to express my gratitude to you for this.

The President: On behalf of the Council I should like to express gratitude and appreciation to all of the members of the Security Council mission, which was very ably led by Ambassador Levitte, for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibility on the Council's behalf. My only personal regret is that I was not able to join the mission, because I was detained here by my duties as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey, Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with the statement by the European Union.

The European Union welcomes the third Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, which took place between 27 April and 7 May, as a proof of the Council's determination to maintain a long-term engagement in favour of peace in the Great Lakes region. We wish to pay tribute to the leadership shown by Ambassador Jean-David Levitte as head of that mission.

The European Union welcomes the results of the meetings of the inter-Congolese dialogue, during which the various delegations discussed highly sensitive issues in a calm and constructive climate. We note that the 37 reports approved establish beyond doubt the high level of commitment invested in the search for national reconciliation and peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The European Union also wishes to express its thanks for the work of the dialogue facilitator's team and for the efforts of the Government of South Africa.

The European Union takes note of the signed agreement between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Mouvement pour la libération du Congo (MLC), which has been endorsed by many political opposition parties and representatives of sectors of civil society. The political agreement reached at the dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the MLC, to which a majority of the participants were also parties, could facilitate the political transition and help consolidate the regional peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo based on the Lusaka Agreement and the resolutions of the Security Council. The European Union welcomes the desire expressed by the signatories to extend the agreement to all Congolese parties and invites them to pursue discussions in a spirit of openness in order to reach a comprehensive and all-inclusive agreement on the transitional institutions.

We support the Council's call to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) and the MLC that they continue negotiations on a comprehensive and integral agreement. We ask all the Congolese parties to act responsibly, show a willingness to compromise and abide by the framework established by the Lusaka Agreements and corresponding resolutions of the United Nations.

The European Union calls on all countries in the region to use their influence on all the Congolese parties so that they respect and support the desire for peace, democracy and reconciliation expressed at Sun City.

The European Union remains very concerned by the continuing clashes in the north and east of the country and by the increasing instability in Kasai. It urges all the parties to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement to refrain from all military operations or acts of provocation that could threaten the political impetus that has emerged from Sun City.

Regarding the withdrawal of foreign forces, the European Union supports the proposal presented by the Security Council mission for the establishment of a "curtain" of troops along the eastern borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as an interim measure aimed at ensuring border security in the final stages of troop withdrawal.

We recall that the parties will have to work together to create the climate of confidence and security necessary to facilitate the process of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR), and we call on them to work closely among themselves and with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in this regard. The DDRRR unit is playing a crucial role in phase III of MONUC deployment, and it has to be given the means to fulfil its obligations. The European Union supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General in his report S/2002/169 that the military strength of MONUC be increased, and we encourage the Security Council in this regard to give due consideration to this recommendation when it discusses the renewal of the mandate of MONUC.

We hope that the situation of the combatants at Kamina will be resolved soon, and that this will constitute a good start for the DDRRR operations. The European Union is ready to support any efforts in this regard, and the European Commission is preparing a first contribution of 20 million euros to the World Bank trust fund.

The European Union also supports the Security Council's strong stance on the immediate and unconditional demilitarization of Kisangani.

We remain deeply concerned about the serious violations of human rights and the appalling humanitarian situation affecting a large part of the population in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We support the recommendation of the mission that the Security Council pay particular attention to MONUC's mandate in the field of human rights and humanitarian assistance to those who need it most, taking into account the needs of women and girls. It is to be hoped that the progressive deployment of humanitarian and human rights personnel in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will lead to improvements in this area.

The European Union considers that the establishment of a follow-up mechanism to the peace process, as suggested by the mission, would be important in helping ensure coordination and coherence in the action taken by the international community.

With regard to the situation in Burundi, the European Union is extremely concerned by the continuing violence and worsening humanitarian situation, particularly in the rural area of Bujumbura. Once again, it appeals to all the warring factions to respect the civilian population in the name of international humanitarian law and calls on all parties to respect human rights.

The Union condemns the logic of war that the armed groups still seem to be following. The Union calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities and appeals to the various factions of the armed groups to continue with the talks currently in progress with the firm intention of bringing them to a successful conclusion. At the same time, the Union calls on the Burundian Government to put forward a transparent and coherent policy for reintegrating armed groups into the Burundian army. It encourages the ongoing efforts to negotiate a definitive and permanent ceasefire — efforts that are continuing under Gabonese and South African facilitation, with the support of Tanzania. The Union is ready to support this process.

The European Union notes the beginning of the operation for the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in Tanzania, in accordance with the tripartite agreement between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Burundian and Tanzanian Governments. It recalls that, in accordance with the provisions of the Arusha Agreement, the return of refugees must be voluntary and must take place in dignity with guaranteed security, taking into account the particular vulnerability of women and children. The Union urges the armed groups to do everything possible to guarantee the security of refugees returning to Burundi. Reception mechanisms must be put in place before their return.

The Union also encourages the Government and all the transitional institutions to consolidate the reform process that has already begun by implementing the transition programme in accordance with the planned timetable, so that a Burundian society can be constructed that is in harmony with the Agreement and is inclusive of all Burundians.

In conclusion, we concur with the Security Council mission about the need for the transitional Government to implement the reforms called for in the Arusha Agreement. For its part, the Union expresses its willingness to continue to support the peace process in Burundi.

The President: I noticed earlier that there was some puzzlement among observers when I called on a non-member of the Council to speak first. I should have explained that in our prior consultations we agreed that, in proceedings this morning, Ambassador Levitte would first present his report, after which we would invite non-members of the Council to speak and then throw open the floor to Council members to respond or make additional comments.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I have the pleasant duty of expressing my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the Council for the month of May. While paying tribute to the skills of your predecessor, the representative of the Russian Federation, I should like to say how grateful we are that you agreed to convene this public meeting to consider the report of the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region. Coming at a critical moment in the timetable for the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, therefore, in the peace process in my country, I have no doubt that today's meeting will allow us to assess, together, the situation in my country and to analyse the prospects for peace, which, thanks to the support of the Council, no longer seem like an unattainable ideal for the entire population of my country.

We have just been listening to the Permanent Representative of France, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte, who with his usual eloquence and clarity introduced the report of the mission that was recently conducted in the Great Lakes region — a region that has been tormented for more than a decade, yet where all the peoples affected aspire only to peace and a return to the traditional ties of friendship and fraternity that characterized the peaceful nature of their relations in the past. I should thus like to thank Ambassador Levitte for his statement, which was useful, solidly founded and well advised.

This major United Nations body, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, has dispatched three missions to our subregion in the space of two years — a rare occurrence in the history of the Security Council. My Government is convinced that this demonstrates how concerned the Council is to ensure for the peoples of the Great Lakes region in general and, in particular, of the Congo — where the people have been beaten down by the devastating effects of a four-year war of aggression — the right to peace, as well as to development, enabling them to enjoy in peace their natural resources, without which there will be no economic renewal.

My Government is therefore grateful to the international community, which was represented in all its diversity in the Security Council mission, for having taken the time to visit the subregion once again in order to gauge the progress made since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to give an impetus, which we hope will be decisive, to the search for a long-lasting solution and an end to the crisis that is gripping the entire Great Lakes region, whose prolongation represents a war of aggression of which my country is the sacrificial victim.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo welcomes the report of the Security Council mission. We appreciate in particular the fact that, in following up on earlier reports of various Council missions to our subregion, this report has the added benefit of informing the international community of the efforts and immense sacrifices made by my Government to restore peace and normality in my country and to promote actions to return justice and dignity to the Congolese people.

The Security Council mission coincided with the end of the activities of the inter-Congolese dialogue. Those activities were sanctioned by the adoption of

some 40 resolutions relating to the organization of the transition, as well as the signing of the political agreement for the consensual management of the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, better known as the Framework Agreement.

I should like at this point to express the sincere gratitude of my country to Sir President Ketumile Masire for having conducted the facilitation dialogue that made possible that inter-Congolese agreement. The achievements, and the progress made in Sun City, will doubtless form the foundation of the renewal and rebirth of the Congolese nation.

My Government would also like to thank President Thabo Mbeki of the Republic of South Africa, who hosted the dialogue, not only for all his efforts, which have been constant and which he continues to make for peace in my country, but especially for his personal involvement in the search for an acceptable solution for the majority of the participants.

The lights have dimmed on Sun City and on the inter-Congolese dialogue. At present, we must continue to move forward towards the complete success of the remaining stages of the implementation calendar of the Lusaka Agreement for the greatest possible benefit of the Congolese people. I am thinking in particular of the process of creating new institutions; of deploying the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in phase III; of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement; of the orderly withdrawal of all foreign troops; of re-establishing the administrative authority of the State throughout the entire national territory; of the disarmament of non-military personnel; and of measures to normalize the security situation along the internationally recognized borders.

I must affirm that the framework agreement, agreed to by 80 per cent of the participants in the dialogue, is open to components and parties that have not yet joined it. Discussions must continue on this point. I can assure the Security Council that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will spare no effort to convince our brothers and sisters who have not yet done so to associate themselves with the majority. In order to do this, Major General Joseph Kabila has given the Council every assurance that he will seek to persuade the remaining entity and parties to join the national camp. The President of the Republic has noted the Government's willingness to pursue discussions across the board with those who have not yet signed the framework agreement. Contacts of that type have occurred, similar to those that took place on 2 May in Luanda, Angola, alongside the joint meeting of the Political Committee and the Security Council.

Moreover, the President of the Republic has also noted his firm desire to associate that entity and those parties, even as observers, with the entire process that has been largely begun to establish and create new republican institutions. Finally, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is confident that the Security Council, for its part, will remain active in helping to make the agreement fully inclusive, in a spirit of openness and understanding.

It is true that history will judge us on our ability to achieve national reconciliation. In the higher interest of the Congolese nation, we must make national reconciliation succeed, but we must also be aware that it will work against the demands of justice, for which history will judge us even more harshly.

One principle dear to President Joseph Kabila is that of keeping one's word. Under his leadership, significant progress has been possible in the peace process; the inter-Congolese dialogue took place; the military front has remained calm and the ceasefire has been fully respected; and the disengagement and redeployment of all forces has been observed, except by Rwanda, which, contrarily, is strengthening its positions and is now fighting the Banyamulenge, whom it claimed to protect.

It is important that the Council be able to follow up on the request made by the Political Committee on 2 May that all parties be required to comply with the relevant provisions of resolution 1399 (2002), adopted unanimously, and with the measures and practical decisions adopted by the Political Committee at its meeting in Lusaka on 20 and 21 March. The Congolese people and its President hope that 2002 will be the year when peace is restored. In that respect, the Government has welcomed the idea set forth by the Council mission to create buffer zones that would promote the orderly withdrawal of all foreign troops and allow us to find a solution to the military aspect of the war of aggression.

Any new mandate for MONUC should be steeped in that reality. In other words, the mandate to be

extended in the coming weeks should include a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops, a detailed description of a joint monitoring mechanism and a necessary proposal to strengthen MONUC staffing significantly so that it may fulfil its mandate effectively. Similarly, in order to succeed in establishing peace, my Government has implemented to the letter the Kampala Plan and its Harare sub-plans concerning disengagement and redeployment. We have gone even further by cantoning Rwandan ex-combatants at Kamina. Some 20 of these have volunteered to go to Rwanda and we continue to await the authorization of the Kigali authorities to enable their return to their own country.

President Kabila has stated and I reiterate that my Government does not and will never support armed groups that could destabilize their country of origin. MONUC can verify that. My Government is deeply determined to continue acting to consolidate the peace process in the Great Lakes region. It is in that context that the recovery and destruction of the weapons of the Rwandese ex-combatants should be seen, for which a symbolic ceremony was held in Kinshasa in the presence of the members of the Security Council. It is also in that context that my Government invited the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to establish a presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to facilitate its enquiries and to eliminate any new pretext for a permanent occupation of a portion of our national territory.

From our point of view, and with respect particularly to armed Rwandese, whoever they may be, we must be certain that they all leave Congolese territory and return to their own country. The Democratic Republic of the Congo wishes to live in peace and good relations with its nine neighbours and will not accept that three among them want it otherwise. The warming of relations with our sister Republic of Burundi proves that this is possible.

I will not dwell on the thorny issue of the demilitarization of Kisangani. So much has been said and written about it. If the Security Council is to restore its credibility on this issue, it must act and act quickly. The entire Democratic Republic of the Congo is watching the Council and expecting it to take bold decisions. However, Kisangani is the mirror, or rather the reflection, of the despair and terrible suffering of an entire dying people. The social and humanitarian crisis in my country has grown to disturbing proportions that particularly affect the vulnerable sectors of the population: women and children. It is to the credit of the members of Council mission that they have noted this human disaster and recognized the broader problem of the urgent need for economic and reconstruction assistance for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Security Council's visit was a barometer and the members of the mission were able to see for themselves the desire of the Congolese people to a better life. Thanks to the mission, river traffic has resumed on both banks of the Congo River all the way to Kisangani, where the mission met a humanitarian convoy. Since then, air traffic has resumed, albeit slowly, over 70 per cent of the national territory.

While the immediate challenges before us may be the reunification of the country, the consolidation of peace and stability and the organization of free and democratic elections in order to put an end to the crisis of legitimacy, they will be difficult to achieve without a significant renewal of economic activity and a resumption of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Today all of the country's infrastructure has to be rebuilt, mainly its roads and railways.

The international community must attach the same importance to the economic development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the countries of the Great Lakes region. This question is crucial if we truly wish to break forever the link between poverty and the breaches of the peace and security in our subregion.

My Government shares the Council's opinion that an international conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region organized under the auspices of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity would help the countries of our subregion to re-establish balance, which would serve the interests of our peoples.

Before I finish my remarks, allow me to paraphrase the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mr. Léonard She Okitundu, who, in reminding the members of the Security Council's mission that the well-being or suffering of the Congolese people would depend significantly on the decisions that the Security Council would soon take, emphasized that the Council's mission raised new hopes in the hearts of the Congolese people —

particularly among those in the occupied territories. Those hopes include, in particular, the hope of seeing the aggressor foreign troops leave the Democratic Republic of the Congo once and for all; the hope of seeing the city of Kisangani demilitarized at last and getting the third phase of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) done; the hope of seeing the Congolese people peacefully enjoying their right to decide their own affairs independently and in full sovereignty; the hope of an entire people that their country will once again find its place among the community of nations to meet the challenges of national reconstruction and globalization; and the hope finally to live in a good-neighbourly fashion with the countries around them in conformity with their calling to be the cradle of African integration.

It is my hope that all the recommendations contained in the report of the Security Council mission will be followed-up and implemented. For our part, I can assure the Council that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is prepared to play its role, as we are firmly convinced that, above all, we must respect the deep aspirations of the Congolese people as a whole for peace, stability and national reconciliation.

I cannot conclude without expressing my Government's thanks to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to his Special Representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Amos Namanga Ngongi — whom I am happy to see here today — for their active support for the peace process in my country. I cannot fail to mention all the staff of MONUC and all the associated humanitarian persons for their tireless efforts to find lasting peace and security for my country. To all of them I wish to express my Government's gratitude for their full dedication to the cause of peace and the restoration of dignity to the Congolese people.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): On 24 February 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1291 (2000), which endorsed the Lusaka Agreement signed by the Congolese parties as a framework for bringing about peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The resolution expressed its strong support for the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement which, according to resolution 1291 (2000),

> "represents the most viable basis for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo". (*resolution 1291 (2000), fifth preambular paragraph*)

Resolution 1291 (2000) went on to call on all parties to

> "fulfill their obligations under the Ceasefire Agreement". (*ibid, para. 1*)

The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement states that

> "In order to arrive at a new political dispensation and national reconciliation arising from the inter-Congolese political negotiations, the Parties agree upon the implementation of the following principles:
>
> (a) the inter-Congolese political negotiations process shall include beside the Congolese parties, namely the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congolese Rally for Democracy and the Movement for the Liberation of Congo, the political opposition as well as representatives of the *forces vives*;
>
> (b) all the participants in the inter-Congolese political negotiations shall enjoy equal status;
>
> (c) all the resolutions adopted by the inter-Congolese political negotiations shall be binding on all the participants". (*S/1999/815, enclosure I, annex A, para. 5.2*)

However, the report of the Security Council mission that visited the Great Lakes region from 27 April to 7 May 2002 stated that

> "The mission trusts that, in accordance with the views expressed by its interlocutors, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MLC and RCD-Goma will pursue their talks with a view to reaching a comprehensive and inclusive agreement in accordance with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. Such an agreement might then be endorsed by the parties to the inter-Congolese dialogue, in the presence of the neutral facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire. In this context,

> the mission recommends that the Security Council, within the next few days, should consider taking further initiatives on this matter in coordination with the signatories of the Lusaka Agreement and the leaders of the region." (*S/2002/537, para. 23*)

The Security Council will therefore understand the concern of my Government that the Security Council seems to be departing from resolution 1291 (2000) and the intent of the Lusaka Agreement, which it has already endorsed. Our concern is that paragraph 23 of the report before the Council may be read to mean that the three armed parties in the Congolese dialogue can reach agreement by themselves and then impose it on the unarmed groups in the Congo. There are five components to the inter-Congolese dialogue: the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma (RCD-Goma), the unarmed groups and civil society. According to the Lusaka Agreement, the five components must be treated equally. That is how they were treated during the inter-Congolese dialogue.

As the Security Council is aware, South Africa has had the honour to host the inter-Congolese dialogue, in which the people of the Congo negotiated an end to decades of conflict in their country. Over 500 Congolese from all walks of life came to Sun City to begin the process of rebuilding their country. The delegates at the inter-Congolese dialogue repeatedly made the point that, since the 1960 overthrow of President Patrice Lumumba and the only democratically elected Government that the Congo had ever known, the Congo itself had never had legitimate State institutions. Accordingly, they saw the dialogue as a critically important step in a process that would lead to the emergence of legitimate State institution, born of the democratic elections that would be held at the end of a short transitional period. They were determined, once and for all, to confront and deal with what they called the "crisis of legitimacy" in their country. When they adjourned after 52 days, they had adopted 40 resolutions that defined the kind of truly independent, united, peaceful, democratic and prosperous Congo that they and their people want to see. The content of those resolutions included political and legal concerns, peace and national reconciliation, the economy and finance, humanitarian, social and cultural concerns, and defence and security.

By any standard, it was a wonderful, historic and extraordinary achievement, especially because it expressed the sovereign will of a very representative convention of the leaders of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It left the dialogue with one outstanding task specified in the 1999 Lusaka Agreement – agreement on the political institutions of the transition to democratic Government, the next urgent and decisive task that confronts the Congolese political and social leadership that met at Sun City.

The illegal removal of the Lumumba Government in 1960 destroyed the brand-new legitimate political institutions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The dialogue has an historic obligation to begin the process leading to the birth of new and stable political institutions that derive their legitimacy from the will of the people, as did the institutions that led to the Government of Patrice Lumumba.

My Government believes that, for the inter-Congolese dialogue to succeed in its tasks, it will have to draw the necessary lessons from the disastrous period since the overthrow and assassination of President Patrice Lumumba, as well as from all genuine friends of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Congolese people must determine their destiny without the foreign interference of patrons. The Congolese people must defeat those within the Congolese political class who put personal power and benefit above the people's interests. The Congolese people must fight against ethnic and regional divisions for the unity of their country. The Congolese people must insist on an inclusive process as a necessary condition to unite the country and the people, to destroy mistrust and to build mutual confidence among all stakeholders, without which a new and stable Congo will not be born. The Congolese people must oppose the use of force as a means to acquire and legitimize political power. And the Congolese people must insist that all agreements be honoured, including the Lusaka Agreement, as a critical first step towards the entrenchment of the rule of law.

My delegation would like to appeal to the Security Council to assist the people of the Congo on their journey to freedom by reaffirming its support for the Lusaka Agreement. The Council must support and respect the position of former President Ketumile Masire as the neutral facilitator chosen by the

Congolese people and endorsed by the Organization of African Unity. My Government strongly believes that the Council can do that by encouraging and supporting all components of the inter-Congolese dialogue – the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Mouvement de libération du Congo (MLC), the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD-Goma), the unarmed groups and civil society – as they seek to rebuild their own country. We would hope that the Council would not be seen as taking sides in the Congo, especially between the armed and the unarmed groups. We hope that the Council will continue to treat all sides equally in their quest for a lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): My country congratulates you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We should also like to congratulate your predecessor, who served in April, the month when the Council decided to make a trip to visit the Great Lakes Region.

My country appreciated that initiative of the Council, in particular because its objective was to search for all the ways and means by which peace could return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to the entire African Great Lakes region. My country welcomes the fact that the Council has focused all its attention on the underlying causes that prompted Rwanda to intervene militarily in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by virtue of its natural right of legitimate defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Rwanda's concerns with regard to the security of our country and our population were expressed in our letter dated 15 April 2002 (S/2002/420) addressed to the Security Council and by the Rwandan delegation to the political committee that met in Angola during the Council's visit and during the audience that the President of the Republic of Rwanda granted Council members. Those concerns have received the Council's attention, according to the representative of France, head of the Security Council mission, and we welcome that.

I recall clearly the crucial moment when we decided to fight the former Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) and the Interahamwe militias systematically and to pursue them into their Congolese sanctuaries. That was the day — I was in the Government at the time — when, entering from Congolese territory, the ex-FAR and the militias massacred many innocent people in Rwanda, including a woman who was the mayor of one of the districts of Cyangugu province, which borders on the Democratic Republic of the Congo in southwestern Rwanda. I also recall the day — during the time I served in the Government — when we decided to advance the 600 kilometres referred to earlier by the representative of France. There as well, the action was based on the security of Rwanda and its people.

Everyone will recall the statements of President Kabila at Kinshasa and of President Mugabe at Lubumbashi, in which the two heads of State declared that they were going to bomb Rwanda. We all remember those two statements, and the Government of Rwanda took them very seriously. We thought that such threats could be carried out only by using a certain number of airports in Kisangani, Kindu and Kalemi, among others. As the result of those threats to bomb our country using a limited number of airports in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as declared by the two heads of State, we were obliged to try to prevent such bombing.

The Lusaka Peace Agreement, if it were implemented in all its components, would reassure Rwanda as soon as the planners and perpetrators of Rwandan genocide now in the Democratic Republic of the Congo no longer have the political, military, material and financial support that they now have and are disarmed, disengaged and reintegrated into the socioeconomic life of the country, in the case of those who have not been held accountable before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha or before other tribunals.

The inter-Congolese dialogue is a major component, even a decisive component, in the implementation of the Lusaka Peace Agreement. Rwanda and the sister Republic of Uganda have just publicized through our two Foreign Ministers the common position of our two countries and the specific proposals that could lead Sun City to a political agreement and fully inclusive power-sharing.

The agreement between President Kabila and Mr. Bemba is an agreement only between these two

individuals, who negotiated it in a hotel room, away from the facilitator and the formal framework of the inter-Congolese dialogue. We believe that the two partners of the inter-Congolese dialogue must rejoin the other Congolese partners under the auspices of Facilitator Masire and negotiate inclusive power-sharing acceptable to all.

As the Permanent Representative of South Africa rightly said, all the Congolese partners of the inter-Congolese dialogue must be considered equal. That is what the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs for the future of that beautiful land and the Congolese people, who have been suffering for decades.

The President: I thank the representative of Rwanda for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the representative of Burundi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is delighted to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Security Council. We congratulate you.

My delegation listened with genuine satisfaction to the presentation of the report of the Security Council mission by Ambassador Jean-David Levitte. His presentation was clear and complete. The report itself really goes to the heart of the problems of the Great Lakes region. It is an honest summary of the talks between the members of the Security Council and the various Burundian authorities. It makes recommendations that are encouraging to the population of Burundi, which has suffered for so long from destructive warfare.

Six months have elapsed since the establishment of the transitional institutions in Burundi. The record of these institutions may be slim in terms of accomplishments, but it is generally positive in terms of the will to work together and the determination to move forward despite the absence of a ceasefire and international economic assistance.

The Security Council mission, which spent 24 hours in Bujumbura, on 5 and 6 May 2002, undoubtedly understood — and we see this in the report — that the peace process remains fragile because of the continuing violence and the implacable poverty afflicting the population. The most regrettable danger to the peace process may indeed be the country's disastrous economic situation.

I wish to recall the following. While the Burundians are primarily responsible for the situation in their own country, the role of the international community is not negligible. The Peace Agreement was signed with the support and pressure of the international community. We were told at the time that assistance would promptly unblocked. Then, in the face of the refusal of armed groups to join the Arusha process, further pressure was exerted on the Government so that the transitional institutions might be established without awaiting the ceasefire. Today the institutions are there. But they are increasingly being discredited, as is the Peace Agreement itself, which brings neither the peace nor the resources promised.

The Security Council may not have had the time to gage the depth of frustration and disappointment of the population and its leaders, or the extreme poverty of 6 million Burundians, which is increasingly swamping them in despair. Yet the subregion has the means to prevent armed groups from taking the peace process hostage; it is a region which for two and one-half years imposed an economic embargo on Burundi to force the authorities to enter into negotiations with the armed groups. We wonder why today it is displaying such patience in the face of the intransigent attitude of armed groups, while the risk of seeing the peace process crumble is becoming increasingly real.

The Burundian Government is going to continue, and to even intensify, its bilateral contacts that have positively developed recently with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania so that the necessary pressure may be placed on the armed groups, with a view to negotiating and signing the ceasefire as soon as possible.

Even if some international financial institutions set new conditions that are unacceptable to a country that actually needs assistance to meet these conditions and that has to struggle against a formidable rebellion that kills innocent people, the Government of Burundi is determined to move forward to implement wherever possible the provisions of the Peace Agreement. It is determined to initiate the administrative, political, social and economic reforms that financial means and security constraints may allow.

The Government will intensify its contacts with the countries of the sub-region and the facilitation so that further talks with the armed groups can be

organized with the objective of arriving, if not at the signing of a ceasefire, at the very least at the cessation of hostilities before 1 July 2002, the fortieth anniversary of Burundi's independence. As of that date, those who have not rejoined the peace process should be disqualified politically and be rendered unable to do harm by all peace-loving Burundians and by the countries of the subregion, which plan to hold a summit on Burundi in the second half of June. After all, applying the Peace Agreement also means taking severe measures against the armed groups that refuse to join the Agreement and want the Arusha process to fail.

Article 2 of the Agreement provides what the international community and Burundi must do to thwart the enemies of the peace Agreement. In the meantime, the Burundian population and its leaders are placing their hopes in the initiatives promised by the Security Council with the International Monetary Fund and other donors, so that the country can be saved before it is too late. This will be possible only if all partners, within and without, fulfil their commitments now, not tomorrow.

Peace in Burundi also depends on the situation in the Great Lakes region, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is Burundi's hope that the inter-Congolese dialogue will continue and will open the doors to being as inclusive as possible. Burundi is particularly interested in the demobilization and disarmament of armed groups, including the Burundian rebels. For that purpose, the proposal to establish a buffer zone is an interesting solution, and Burundi is prepared to support it. However, the Government of Burundi also wants all parties to work in a positive spirit to restore real peace and security to the two Kivus, which border countries with serious security concerns along their border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, allow me to say how greatly the Burundian authorities appreciated the exchanges and the words of encouragement provided by the mission of the Security Council and how deeply the long-suffering Burundian population is touched by the expression of care and solidarity reflected in the Security Council's two visits in a twelve-month period.

The President: I thank the representative of Burundi for his kind words addressed to me.

I shall now give the floor to Ambassador Levitte to respond to some of the comments that have been made.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): We have heard the major interlocutors with great interest. I would like to thank them for their remarks, with one necessary clarification on one point, with regard to paragraph 23 of the Council's report — and I am looking to my friend, Ambassador Kumalo — so that there is no misunderstanding as to what the Security Council has in mind with respect to the inter-Congolese dialogue. I think that it is a very important point. The Security Council is strictly following the text of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The Council spent a great deal of time to find the wording to express what we had in mind.

We all hope that the inter-Congolese dialogue will end in a closing ceremony bringing together all the participants, so that, in the presence of Sir Ketumile Masire, there will be a consensus bringing together, without exception, all those who did such tremendous work at Sun City.

However, we are in a fairly delicate phase, in which we see the risk of the crystallization of two opposing blocks of unequal size, but which could lead to the risk of a partition. The risk of the crystallization of antagonistic positions prompts us to say that, in the current phase, it is desirable to promote direct and discreet contacts. That is what we did in the presence of all of the Ministers of the Lusaka Political Committee in Luanda on 2 May, where the three parties signatories of the Lusaka Agreement, the armed parties, met before our official meeting. That format was not without precedents. In fact, before the opening of the Sun City meeting, there were, with the agreement of Sir Ketumile Masire, two meetings among the same three parties. The meetings were useful for reconciling the points of view. One of the meetings was held in Geneva with the discreet participation of a representative of Sir Ketumile and of our friend, Ibrahima Fall. The second meeting was held in Abuja, using the same format. Those two meetings get things moving and in favourable conditions for the Sun City meeting.

So, what we have in mind — I think it is worthwhile to clarify it for everyone — is to promote in the current phase a discreet dialogue, without any preconditions — that is important — and in a spirit of

openness, in order to reconcile the points of view and to arrive at an inclusive agreement that leaves no one out. Such an agreement obviously includes civil society and the political parties. The problem today is that civil society and the political parties have taken sides, when what we need is to bring the whole together through the process, which could be effective in the current phase — we think — but should be discreet. That is the clarification I wanted to bring to the attention of our friends, in particular to the Ambassador of South Africa.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): First of all, I want to fully support what Ambassador Levitte has set out by way of conclusions to the mission and his response to the interventions that we heard earlier.

I would like to make one additional point which I think is very important. As I understand the view of all members of the Security Council mission, we came back convinced that there was a real chance to move forward in resolving the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in the Great Lakes region if the inter-Congolese dialogue could be brought to a conclusion that fitted the Lusaka Agreement and the aims of resolution 1291 (2000) and following resolutions. In our conversations with the Presidents of the countries that we visited, it was quite clear to us that they were prepared to work on the basis of a successful dialogue to complete the rest of the programme that was required under Lusaka. This puts an extra focus on the need to conclude the dialogue successfully so that it will be something which Mr. Ketumile Masire can declare a proper result that satisfies the conditions of the dialogue. That will then produce a series of reactions and further activities under the requirements of coordination between the parties of Lusaka, which can produce peace in the country, demilitarization of the armed groups, the withdrawal of all foreign troops and the restoration of stability and of economic normality in the region. It is a watershed that the Council cannot allow to be left on the wrong side of. Therefore, it is very important that, in the days and weeks to follow, we all put our collective and several influences behind a successful conclusion of the dialogue. It is more than just one opportunity among many; it is the opportunity to make progress at a time when the fighting has died down and the people of the Congo sense that there is an opportunity for them to have a future quite different from the one that they have had to face over the last three years. So, we must all find practical ways of producing a real conclusion to the dialogue and not just support with rhetoric the words that have been written in resolutions. We have to act to support a real conclusion to the dialogue to release that potential.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4533

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4533rd meeting

Thursday, 16 May 2002, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr.Mahbubani	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ekorong A Dong
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Rivas
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mrs. Huree-Agarwal
	Mexico	Ms. Lajous
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Atieh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-38384 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Šahović (Yugoslavia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

I now give the floor to Mr. Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno: I am pleased to provide an update of developments in Kosovo since the members of the Council were last briefed by Mr. Steiner on 24 April. Let me begin with the provisional institutions of self-government.

On 9 May, the Kosovo Government submitted to the Assembly its draft programme, which is based on the agreement of 28 February that formed the Government. Priorities highlighted in the programme include consolidating democratic structures, improving education and health care and promoting economic development. It also focuses on the protection of the rights and interests of communities — including the right to return — and regional integration, including meaningful dialogue with the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Unfortunately, the Kosovo Serb Return Coalition — known by its initials, KP — has not so far put forward candidates for the three government posts allotted to it. Although three names appeared in the local press on 7 May following a KP meeting in Leposavic, it appears that the issue of candidates has become stuck in Belgrade. This is regrettable. First, it means that the Kosovo Serbs are still not part of the decision-making process and did not participate in the talks on the government programme. Secondly, it tends to undermine the KP Assembly members.

As was to be expected, the division of responsibilities between the provisional institutions of self-government and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under the Constitutional Framework is causing some friction. For example, on 9 May the Assembly debated two issues that lie within the responsibilities reserved for the Special Representative: the security situation in Mitrovica, and the border demarcation agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Intervening in that debate, Mr. Steiner recognized the natural desire of the elected representatives to discuss issues important to them. In order to uphold the division of responsibilities outlined in the Constitutional Framework, the issues were discussed in an informal session of the Assembly. At the same time, Mr. Steiner underlined that such discussions should not sidetrack the Assembly from focusing on the many urgent matters for which it does have responsibility. He drew the Assembly's attention to some of the critical remarks made by members of the Council during the last meeting — regarding, for example, the lack of a multi-ethnic civil service and the unacceptable living conditions of minority communities — and asked the Assembly to focus on those areas.

I can report that the situation in Mitrovica has now calmed down somewhat. UNMIK is continuing its dialogue with local representatives in northern Mitrovica and with Belgrade and is working closely with KFOR to maintain calm. Regarding the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNMIK is working in the Joint Expert Committee to find practical arrangements that will allow Kosovo Albanian farmers access to their lands on the border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

I would now like to turn to the municipal elections, which, as the Council knows, were originally scheduled to take place on 21 September. Due to a delay in approving the election budget — which was approved by the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on 19 April — the elections will now take place on 26 October. An important element of this year's election is the increase in responsibilities undertaken by the local electoral bodies. For example, the municipal election commissions have assumed responsibility for appointing and training some 8,000 polling station committee members, and work has begun to establish the provisional electoral management body.

This year's municipal election will provide an opportunity for those communities that boycotted the 2000 elections, particularly the Kosovo Serb community, to participate. The aim is to have all municipal assembly members elected, not appointed as in some cases, for the next mandate period, which will be four years.

(*spoke in French*)

Turning now to rule of law issues and public order, I would like to inform the Council that a panel of international judges in Pristina handed down the first sentence on terrorism-related charges on 10 May. The defendant, who was charged with the murder of the head of the Yugoslav passport office in Pristina last April, was sentenced to 23 years' imprisonment. Also, another panel of international judges recently handed down a 15-year sentence to a Kosovo Albanian for the murder of an elderly Kosovo Serb woman in Prizren.

Effective maintenance of law and order requires UNMIK to look beyond the boundaries of Kosovo. It is for that reason that, at the end of April, an agreement was reached with the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of Serbia on a draft agreement on police cooperation that lays out an effective framework for a more systematic sharing of information on a range of law enforcement issues.

On 10 May, UNMIK hosted a regional ministerial conference in Pristina on cigarette smuggling that was attended by representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia, and by the Minister for Finance of Kosovo's provisional institutions. In the Pristina declaration issued at the end of the conference, the participants agreed, among other things, to pursue their efforts to harmonize excise rates, to establish greater coordination of efforts to regulate the movement of goods in the region through improved exchange of information, and to a common approach to improve the collection of customs fees and various taxes. An agreement was also reached on holding a follow-up conference in Zagreb in September that will also include the participation of representatives responsible for the implementation of the Stability Pact.

On 29 April, UNMIK's Institution-Building Pillar published its fourth review of the criminal justice system in Kosovo. The report concluded that, while areas of concern remain, the foundations of a sustainable system based on human rights and access to justice have been laid. Outstanding areas of concern include the independence of the judiciary, conditions of detention and mental health issues.

(*spoke in English*)

On the issue of returns, UNMIK, together with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), briefed donors on 7 May on the principles guiding the returns process and outlined the financial requirements for 2002, which amount to over 16 million euro. The aim is to achieve increasing returns this year in order to create momentum for more significant numbers of returns during 2003 and 2004.

In its draft programme, the Government of Kosovo has committed itself to demonstrating its willingness to address the wishes and concerns of internally displaced persons and refugees. Mr. Rexhepi, the Prime Minister, attended Serbian Orthodox Easter celebrations in the Peć Patriarchate, spoke with Ashkali families that had returned to Vučitrn and visited the mixed municipality of Strpce. He made statements of support for the right of all internally displaced persons to return to their places of origin and called for the removal of enclaves. For the first time, a Kosovo

Albanian representative took part in a "go and inform" visit to internally displaced persons in central Serbia. At the same time, there were again acts of intimidation and violence against members of the minority communities, including the stoning of nuns from the Decani Monastery and the desecration of several graveyards during the Orthodox Easter period.

There have been several recent indications of a desire on the part of members of Kosovo's non-Albanian communities to integrate into municipal life: several groups have begun Albanian language lessons, including the monks in the Decani Monastery, in the Peć region. In Kamenica, in the Gnjilane region, Kosovo Serb physicians participated in a "go and see" visit to the Gnjilane hospital with a view to working there at least once a week.

Efforts have continued to determine the fate of the missing of all communities, which, as members know, remains one of the major obstacles to reconciliation. At the beginning of May, a group of international forensic experts began work at the former morgue run by the International Criminal Tribune for the former Yugoslavia in Orahovac, with the aim of identifying the remains of approximately 1,250 people by the end of the year.

Finally, I would like to report on an event that took place on 24 April and that therefore could not be included in the last briefing: an earthquake measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale hit Kosovo, causing particular damage in the Gnjilane region. One person died and more than 100 people were injured. The Kosovo Protection Corps, which in the Gnjilane region now has seven members from minority communities, responded swiftly and effectively. More than 100 of its members were directly engaged, working together with UNMIK and KFOR. An inter-municipality committee was set up to coordinate the responses of the four municipalities most affected, and an emergency fund was established, for which 500,000 euro has been allocated from the contingency fund of the Kosovo consolidated budget. That response is a good example of every level, both local and international, pulling together for the benefit of those affected in all communities.

That example of pulling together for the benefit of all communities is one that we would like to see in the provisional institutions of self-government. That is where an example of working side by side for the good of Kosovo should be set. It is therefore essential that before any more time is lost, the Kosovo Serb representatives take up their rightful places in the Government. All sides need to help one another to find common ground solutions so that many of the complex situations Kosovo faces — requiring concessions on all sides — can begin to be tackled in a way that will prove effective and sustainable.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4534

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4534th meeting

Friday, 17 May 2002, 10.50 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mahbubani	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in East Timor

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (S/2002/432 and Add.1)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-38612 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in East Timor

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (S/2002/432 and Add.1)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, documents S/2002/432 and S/2002/32/Add.1. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2002/539, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1410 (2002).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4535

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4535th meeting

Friday, 17 May 2002, 10.55 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mahbubani	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States, between 1 January and 31 December 1994

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-38618 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States, between 1 January and 31 December 1994

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/544, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1411 (2002).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4536

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4536th meeting

Friday, 17 May 2002, 11 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mahbubani	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in Angola

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-38624 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/546, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. I should also like to draw attention to document S/2002/535 containing a letter dated 26 April 2002 from Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States of America transmitting a joint statement of the observer countries to the Angolan peace process

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1412 (2002).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4537

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4537th meeting

Monday, 20 May 2002, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Jayakumar	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in East Timor

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (S/2002/432 and Add.1).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-38906 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in East Timor

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (S/2002/432 and Add.1)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Costa Rica, Cuba, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Thailand, Ukraine and Venezuela, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Dauth (Australia), Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Mr. Serbini (Brunei Darussalam), Mrs. Chassoul (Costa Rica), Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia), Miss Durrant (Jamaica), Mr. Satoh (Japan), Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia), Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Mr. MacKay (New Zealand), Mr. Yuchengco (Philippines), Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal), Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand), Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine) and Ms. Pulido Santana (Venezuela) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/432 and Add.1, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor.

This public meeting has been organized as a parallel commemorative event for the Security Council and the wider membership to celebrate East Timor's independence. It is also an opportunity for all of us to reaffirm our support for and solidarity with East Timor.

I welcome the presence at the Council table of Ms. Louise Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General, and give her the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Many of the meetings that take place in this Chamber concern conflict and tragedy. Today, we meet to celebrate a day of joy for a country that has overcome the conflicts and tragedies of the past.

Shortly after midnight in Dili, the United Nations flag was lowered and the flag of an independent East Timor was raised. History was made as the East Timorese marked the birth of their country — the first independent nation of the new millennium. This is a cause for celebration for the people of that country, who have shown such courage and determination in pursuing their goal, but it is also an occasion to recall the long and painful road that took them to nationhood — a road which required many difficult decisions and severe sacrifices. It is an occasion to remember those East Timorese who dreamed of this day, but did not live to see it happen. This is their day, too.

It is also a moment of inspiration for the entire international community. The people of East Timor have set an example to other nations in their steadfast adherence to the core values of the Charter, reconciliation and the creation of democratic institutions that can safeguard human rights. Their focus on the future, rather than on the past, augurs well for the future.

And so today, we send our warmest congratulations to the people of East Timor, including President Gusmão, Prime Minister Alkatiri and Foreign Minister Ramos-Horta, all of whom have visited this Council and who today assume the solemn responsibility of leading their nation. We wish them courage as they tackle the many difficult challenges that lie before them. The United Nations will work with them as they seek to strengthen the democratic institutions that have been established and to promote the social and economic development of their country.

Let me recall the role of the international community in making this day possible. Let us

recognize the courageous contribution made three years ago by Indonesia and Portugal in the signing of the 5 May agreement, which allowed the East Timorese to express their will for self-determination. Indonesia's forward-looking approach was illustrated yet again this morning when President Megawati Soekarnoputri attended the independence ceremonies in Dili. This gracious gesture of statesmanship does, I hope, augur close cooperation and friendship between East Timor and all its nearest neighbours. Such relations will be crucial to East Timor's long-term stability and prosperity as a nation.

This Security Council can look back with pride on its support for East Timor's quest for nationhood, in which the Council has demonstrated unequalled dedication and imagination. Through the creation of the United Nations Mission in East Timor, the Council helped establish a framework within which the people of East Timor could express their will for self-determination.

In the dark days of September 1999, the swift action of the Council in dispatching a mission to the region and in subsequently authorizing the deployment of a multinational operation played a key part in ending violence and paved the way for future progress. We owe Australia a debt of gratitude for taking a decisive lead in that operation, as we do all the countries that took part.

In establishing the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the Security Council took a bold and unprecedented step. Equipped with a broad mandate, supported by adequate resources and coordinated through a single chain of command, UNTAET was able to help the people of East Timor maintain internal and external security, while laying the foundations for an administrative and political infrastructure and promoting social and economic development.

The international community's contribution of financial and political support and the service of its men and women on the ground has been essential. I am sure the Council will join me in acknowledging with gratitude and admiration the service of the military and civilians of both missions. I am sure it will join me in expressing heartfelt thanks to Sergio Vieira de Mello, whose skill and dedication at the helm of UNTAET over the past two and a half years have been essential to the mission's success, and to Ian Martin, who demonstrated exemplary leadership under pressure during the crisis of September 1999.

I know the Council will also join me in paying special tribute to the peacekeepers and United Nations staff who died while trying to help East Timor in its hour of need. We are forever in their debt.

Today is also an occasion to urge the international community to remain generously committed to East Timor in the future. The country faces enormous long-term challenges, particularly in the reduction of poverty and the building of a viable economy. Much also remains to be done to consolidate the country's fragile new institutions to ensure the stability and viability of the new State. The Security Council's decision to authorize a multidimensional follow-on operation — the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor — testifies to its commitment to completing the tasks that it has undertaken. It is a clear demonstration of the Council's conviction that there must be no exit without strategy.

The Security Council will soon be called upon to support East Timor in still another way. Only a few hours ago, the Secretary-General received from the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of East Timor an application for membership of the United Nations. This request will be presented to the Security Council, in accordance with the established procedure. We look forward to its consideration by this body.

But today, the final word belongs to the people of East Timor. As the Secretary-General said last night as the flag of East Timor rose above Dili: "Viva Timor Leste!"

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): It is a pleasure, Mr. President, to see you here in New York, and to welcome you here. I should begin by acknowledging the important role that Singapore has played on the Council and by saying how particularly appropriate it is that Singapore should be President of the Council this month. Kishore Mahbubani has played a role in many of the Council's activities in recent times, but it is on this issue that he has been particularly active and effective, and my Government very much wants to acknowledge that.

It is with a great sense of pride and shared accomplishment that I am here today. Today is a historic moment for the people of East Timor and also for the Council, for the United Nations and for all of its Members. I should like to echo the comments made last night by our Prime Minister, Mr. Howard, in offering our heartfelt congratulations to the people of East Timor as they become citizens of their new nation. Their courage, determination and commitment to the transition process have laid the basis for a stable and democratic nation.

Echoing Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette's comments, I should like to say that today also belongs to the many East Timorese who are not here and who are unable to see the attainment of the goal for which they strived. I should also like to acknowledge with appreciation Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette's remarks and to say how pleased I am to see that she is here today, as she was when Mr. Howard addressed the Council in February.

It is just over three years since the United Nations, Indonesia and Portugal signed the 5 May Agreement — three short years in which the process of popular consultation was established and only two years and nine months since the ballot on 30 August 1999, through which the people of East Timor chose to become independent. In that very short space of time, the people of East Timor, the United Nations and the international community have worked in close partnership to achieve the remarkable feat of establishing, from the ground up, a stable, democratic Government and an Administration that are now ready to take on the responsibilities of independence.

This has been a major undertaking for all the players, particularly the United Nations. I need not remind anyone here today of the extent of the challenges that faced the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) when it was established in October 1999. The fact that UNTAET can hand over authority to an independent East Timor only two and a half years later shows what the United Nations and the Security Council are capable of achieving with the right mix of political will and flexible and creative decision-making, on the basis of sustained international support.

The unique challenges of the East Timor transition have also provided an opportunity for the United Nations, its Member States and the Security Council to put into practice new approaches to peacekeeping and to post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction. Working in a transparent and consultative manner with major troop contributors, the Security Council provided the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) and UNTAET with clear, credible and achievable mandates. It focused from an early stage on the need for a clear exit strategy and on the need to manage and coordinate the Organization's longer-term involvement, including through its funds and agencies. That approach has continued with the recent adoption of a sensible and achievable mandate for the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). For its part, the Secretariat has encouraged an integrated Organization-wide approach to the transition process. It has premised all of UNTAET's activities on the need for sustained capacity-building as the basis for the gradual transfer of authority to the East Timorese.

We have been proud to contribute to this United Nations success story in a wide variety of ways, from our leadership of INTERFET in 1999 to our long-term financial commitment to East Timor's reconstruction and development, including through the signature today of the Timor Sea Treaty, which will guarantee substantial long-term oil and gas revenues for East Timor. Our national role has, however, extended well beyond government-level contributions. Hundreds of Australians have contributed to East Timor's transition, both as members of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and of UNTAET and through non-Government and volunteer activities through the private sector and as United Nations volunteers. The personal relationships and understandings that emerge from such contributions will be invaluable to Australia's future relationship with East Timor. The personal contacts made with the people of East Timor will underpin a warm, cooperative bilateral relationship with our newest neighbour from the first day of its independence.

In the space of three years, the Security Council and the United Nations have overseen an historic transition in East Timor. Today is a day of celebration and success, but the story, of course, is by no means over. All of us need to maintain our commitment to ensuring that the promising beginnings of this new nation are developed and sustained. We all have an interest in a stable and prosperous East Timor that can make a positive contribution to its region and can play

a constructive role as a member of the international community. Our efforts must not end here. Security Council support must be maintained as long as UNMISET is in East Timor, and the broader contributions of the United Nations funds and agencies and other organizations must be brought on-stream as they are needed. Individual bilateral donors as well as multilateral bodies must continue to accord East Timor high priority. We all owe it to the people of East Timor and to the United Nations to ensure that the success story continues.

In closing, I would like once again to acknowledge with Australia's gratitude the invaluable and wonderful contribution of my friend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and his staff — both international and East Timorese — to East Timor's successful transition to independence. At the risk of omitting some important players from the United Nations — this is a perilous course on which I have embarked — it is also timely to recall and pay tribute to the unstinting efforts of Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, Francesc Vendrell, Ian Martin, Tamrat Samuel and others, such as Carina Perelli and Hocine Medili, who contributed in the difficult days of 1999, a period when today's celebrations were a distant aspiration. I also acknowledge the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno and that of his predecessor, Bernard Miyet, and the tireless and dedicated efforts of other Secretariat officials, including Hédi Annabi, Joachim Hutter, Major General Tim Ford, Julian Harston and Ingrid Hayden. Without the contributions of those and many other people, we would not be celebrating East Timor's independence today.

The President: I thank the representative of Australia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): First of all, I would like to express our appreciation for your thoughtfulness, Mr. President, in coming to New York to chair this important meeting. I consider it very appropriate for the Foreign Minister of a country of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to preside over today's debate, for it is very important for independent East Timor to have close relationships with ASEAN countries.

At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to offer our heartfelt congratulations to the people of East Timor, who have achieved independence today. On this independence day, Prime Minister Junichiroh Koizumi sent a congratulatory message to the people of East Timor, in which he stated:

> "Being a national of an Asian country, I am deeply touched by the fact that East Timor, having struggled through a long, painful journey, enters upon a new era this day... We would like to express our profound respect to the people of East Timor for their efforts and courage to date."

Prime Minister Koizumi, on his visit to East Timor on 29 April, also agreed with Mr. Xanana Gusmão and Mr. Mari Alkatiri, who today have respectively become the first President and the first Prime Minister, that Japan and the independent East Timor would build a forward-looking and close relationship. Prime Minister Koizumi further declared that the Government of Japan would continue to extend its active support for East Timor's nation-building efforts towards self-reliance and national reconciliation.

The Government of Japan has been making efforts to play a leading role within the international community in supporting East Timor, and it is already the largest donor in terms of actual disbursements. The Japanese Government has extended $120 million for reconstruction and development, as well as for humanitarian assistance, on the basis of its pledge to provide $130 million over three years, which it made at the first donor conference, which it hosted in Tokyo in December 1999. In addition, at the donor conference held in Dili on 14 and 15 May 2002, the Japanese Government expressed its intention to extend approximately $60 million over the next three years for reconstruction and development, as well as for humanitarian assistance.

An engineering group of 680 troops, including female members, from Japan's Self-Defence Forces is participating in the United Nations peacekeeping operation and engaging in the construction and repair of roads and bridges, which is also expected to contribute to the reconstruction and development of East Timor.

What the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) has achieved in East Timor is a success story of which the United Nations should be proud. I would like to express the Japanese Government's admiration and appreciation to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and to the other members of UNTAET for their leadership and their dedicated efforts.

The Government of Japan supports resolution 1410 (2002), which the Security Council adopted on 17 May 2002, establishing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). Japan will continue to provide assistance to ensure that UNMISET will be able to conduct effective activities for the stability and development of independent East Timor. In that respect, I would like to congratulate our trusted friend, Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, on his assumption of the office of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor, as head of UNMISET. We expect that he will demonstrate outstanding leadership for the success of the Mission.

Although in the case of East Timor it was indeed appropriate that the United Nations peacekeeping operation ran the interim administration, I would like to take this opportunity to state anew the position of the Government of Japan that the modalities of future peacekeeping operations should be considered in the light of each individual situation. Ways of funding multifaceted missions that include a civilian component should also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

It is clear to everyone that after independence East Timor will face a number of difficult challenges. With that recognition, I would like to point out again that it is important for the leadership of East Timor to lead their country in solidarity; that it is important for the people of East Timor to participate in the efforts for nation-building, taking their country's development as a matter of their own responsibility; and that it is important for the international community to continue its support for East Timor.

I would like to emphasize, in particular, that the support of the international community and the development of good, cooperative relations between East Timor and neighbouring countries are indispensable for the stability and prosperity of East Timor.

The Government of Japan, for its part, is determined to spare no effort to continue to play an important role in the international efforts to support East Timor.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to see you in the Council Chamber, Sir, presiding over this important meeting.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Area countries belonging to the European Economic Area Iceland and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

We are gathered to celebrate the birth of a new independent nation. Today in Dili, representatives of more than 80 countries have witnessed the Secretary-General's handing of power to the elected representatives of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

We join the people of East Timor in their joyful celebration and commend their constant efforts, which have finally been rewarded. The history of most nations is fraught with tragedies but also with successes. In their path to independence the East Timorese have learned to persevere. Reconciliation should now be the motto for all those linked to East Timor, both within and outside the new nation. People who have overcome civil conflicts and destruction must now advance not by forgetting but by remembering and overcoming their differences. That effort should receive the sincere support of neighbouring countries and of the rest of the international community.

Just over three years ago, Indonesia and Portugal reached an agreement on consulting the East Timorese about their future. From that moment on, the role of the United Nations was essential to the unfolding of a painful but ultimately successful process leading to independence. We express our gratitude to the Secretary-General and to his Special Representative, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, who has wisely led the

United Nations in the enormous task of helping to create a new nation practically from scratch. All the men and women who have served in United Nations missions in East Timor, as well as the personnel of all the United Nations agencies, of various governmental institutions and of non-governmental organizations, equally deserve our gratitude and admiration. The new Special Representative, Ambassador Sharma, will also receive the full support of the European Union in his newly assumed responsibilities.

The General Assembly recently adopted its resolution 56/282 removing East Timor from the list of non-self-governing territories. That action serves to remind us that the new State will be fully responsible for its international relations. In the case of East Timor, that is of fundamental importance to the country's future. We welcome the steps that Indonesia and East Timor are taking to improve their relations, including the recent meeting of the two Presidents in Jakarta and President Megawati's decision to attend today's independence ceremonies. We trust that those visits signal a shared willingness to establish a mutually beneficial relationship. Many issues remain to be resolved, such as that of bringing to justice those responsible for the violence of 1999. We urge Indonesia, together with East Timor, to resolve the remaining issues, including the important issue of border demarcation.

We also want to acknowledge once more the crucial role of the countries that have supported the United Nations effort by committing resources and a significant number of troops.

The European Union has made a considerable effort to support the nascent State and will continue to be present in East Timor through the aid provided by the European Community and by its member States individually. Many European Union nationals have participated in the successive United Nations missions, and they will be present in the new United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET).

The European Union welcomes the stated commitment of independent East Timor to the protection of human rights. In this context, we underscore the important position taken against the death penalty through its prohibition in the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

The European Union commends the leaders of the new State for the way in which they have participated in the nation-building process, which culminates today. The people of East Timor have shown great political maturity, choosing to support democracy as the only way to achieve peace and progress. We reiterate our congratulations on the successful holding of elections for the first Constituent Assembly, in August 2001, and the first presidency, in April 2002, and we trust that their high standard of broad and peaceful participation will be repeated in the future.

In spite of the achievements of these last three years, we are aware that all has not been achieved. As the new State develops and UNMISET gradually scales down, the international community will need to readjust its assistance, while taking into account the fact that East Timor will continue to have great development needs. The European Union and its member States will continue to support firmly East Timor in this next phase of its development. Public administration, the judicial system, law enforcement and defence are some of the main areas that will require international support.

The Union welcomes Security Council resolution 1410, adopted on 17 May 2002, whereby UNMISET was created. We trust that the new Mission will draw from the experience of its predecessor in helping the East Timorese build a democratic, viable and stable country at peace with its neighbours.

In conclusion, the Democratic Republic of East Timor will soon join us as a Member State of the United Nations. It will be a new Member in a new century, but it will certainly not be a newcomer to this Organization. The United Nations should now regard with pride the successful achievement of a multilateral effort in which people from very different backgrounds have participated with success.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): Like previous speakers, I wish to welcome you, Sir, as you preside over today's meeting, and to express our gratitude to the delegation of Singapore for convening this important meeting. I am particularly pleased to welcome you, Mr. Minister, as the representative of a country with which Ukraine has maintained excellent bilateral relations. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Louise Fréchette for her introductory statement.

As Ukraine's core position on East Timor has already been stated in the Council on numerous occasions, I shall confine myself to making a few short remarks in connection with today's joyful and historic event.

We are gathered here today to welcome the attainment of independence by East Timor and to share our profound delight at what we, the international community, under the auspices of the United Nations, have achieved in East Timor since 1999. Undoubtedly, this success not only opens a new chapter in the history of United Nations peacekeeping operations; it also demonstrates the relevance and the viability of the principles of the United Nations Charter.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Ukraine, let me express my warmest congratulations to the people and the leaders of East Timor on having fulfilled their yearning for a free, independent State. We also congratulate the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and appreciate their able and effective leadership of the international efforts in East Timor.

I would like to note the pivotal role of the United Nations and pay tribute to the efforts of the staff of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the East Timorese in bringing East Timor from a post-conflict situation to independence despite enormous challenges. Incredible progress was made during the past two and one half years in establishing the foundations of the State, in particular, in the political and security spheres and in social and economic development. Together we have done a great job.

My country is proud to have taken an active part in the international nation-building efforts for East Timor. We have contributed a number of officers to the UNTAET civilian police component since its inception, thus assisting the establishment of an effective East Timorese Police Service and promoting its capability, as well as ensuring a stable security environment for a smooth transition to independence. Ukrainian participation in the Security Council Mission to East Timor and Indonesia in November 2000 once again demonstrated the importance attached by my Government to the creation of the independent State of East Timor.

Our enthusiasm for East Timor's independence should not lead us to lose sight of the huge problems that await the future Government. The job, of course, is not finished. We need to ensure that the tremendous achievements in East Timor will be sustainable.

At this critical moment it is also important to send a clear message of encouragement and strong support to the East Timorese people. We believe that the establishment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) by Security Council resolution 1410 (2002) confirms the determination of the international community to assist independent East Timor. This resolution marks the launching of a new phase of partnership between the United Nations and East Timor, in which steadfast cooperation and support in many critical areas will be required to help the people of East Timor exercise their sovereignty.

In conclusion, I wish peace and prosperity for the people of East Timor. I would also like to reaffirm our support for the efforts of UNMISET and the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor, Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, and all East Timorese in achieving these noble goals.

The President: I thank the representative of Ukraine for his kind words addressed to me. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Portugal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal): Let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting of the Security Council to celebrate the independence of East Timor. I also wish to say how honoured we are at your presence here today.

The European Union Presidency has already made a statement, to which I fully subscribe. But I think that members will understand that my country has something of its own to say, especially on this occasion.

I cannot fail to start by remembering that today my country closes an important chapter of its history. The last territory of what was once called the Portuguese colonial empire today exerted the right of self-determination and affirmed its independence. The decolonization process, which this Portuguese generation started and concluded, could not have ended better than with the creation of the democratic nation of East Timor. We are known to be a country that is very proud of its history; indeed we are, and I must say

that we feel proud that we were able, to a certain extent, to contribute to the event we are celebrating today.

For more than 40 years, the United Nations paid special attention to the overseas territories under Portuguese administration. Five of those territories acquired sovereign status in 1975. For reasons history already has taken note of, East Timor did not have the chance to accede to independence in the same year. Only through immense suffering were the East Timorese people, who for many years were forgotten by a great part of the international community, able to keep alive the hope of building their own country. They are the real heroes of our time: those who died for the freedom of their country, those who fought under appalling conditions and in almost complete isolation. They also need to be remembered here today.

Today is a day of joy — a day to congratulate the East Timorese on their courage, on their stubbornness and on their fabulous capacity to live for the future, after all they went through in the past. I want to mention that past — not to exploit any political argument, but to call attention to the fact that the international community still owes a special debt to the East Timorese. That debt has been incurred because of what the international community did not do to support them in their time of need and because of the terrible silence which contributed to their missed chances in those long years when realpolitik prevailed.

The work done by the United Nations more recently in favour of East Timor, under the very able guidance of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, must be highly praised on this day. The United Nations was able to reconcile the East Timorese with the international community, and this must be stated here loudly. For that reason, the United Nations also must be very proud of this moment.

At the last meeting of the Council on this issue, I took the opportunity to thank United Nations officials who contributed to the United Nations presence and activities in the territory. We also owe them a lot, and I want to stress this today in front of Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno, of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), whose work and whose department's work played a vital role in this entire process; they deserve praise from us all.

Today is only the first day of the rest of East Timor's history. The international community needs to understand that the United Nations helped to give birth to a country that, for the time being, will be one of the poorest nations in the world. The world needs to know that East Timor is far from being a stable nation with all the necessary means to face the future.

Last Friday, the Council approved the mandate for a new mission to East Timor, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), which will try to provide assistance and security to the new country in the first months of its life. We very much hope that future decisions related to the level of assistance to be given to East Timor will continue to be based on realistic assessments of the concrete needs of the new country. I am sure that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, will not fail to provide to this Council accurate information in this regard.

It should be noted that East Timor today has constitutional law in which human rights, gender rights and the internal division of power are formally protected. It is our common duty to provide the means for the East Timorese leadership — for Xanana Gusmão, for Mari Alkatiri, for Francisco Guterres, for José Ramos-Horta — to put that constitutional law fully into practice. They need to rebuild a country where young generations may feel they have the necessary means, where refugees may find a place to live and reintegrate, and where former guerrilla members may receive collective recognition for what they did to restore their national project. It is also our duty to be attentive to their need to protect the full sovereignty of the country and its capacity to affirm it at every moment without any ambiguity or limitation, to support the establishment and consolidation of the republic's new network of external relations and to facilitate its complete integration into regional and international structures.

The creation of the eighth nation with Portuguese as its official language is a moment of pride for my country and, I am sure, for the other Portuguese-speaking countries. All of them, without hesitation, have always sided with East Timor in its long fight for freedom. Just a few hours ago, a Portuguese ambassador presented his credentials to President Xanana Gusmão. A bilateral programme of cooperation has already been signed between our two Governments. For our part, we are prepared to give the new East Timor authorities all possible support in their difficult tasks ahead. And we will be looking forward to the

date we will be receiving East Timor, in this House, as the first nation of the twenty-first century. *Viva Timor Leste*.

The President: I thank the representative of Portugal for his kind words addressed to me. The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Costa Rica, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Chassoul (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Minister, may I tell you how very pleased we are to see you presiding over this meeting.

On behalf of the States members of the Rio Group, it is my honour to congratulate the people and the Government of East Timor on their independence day. Today East Timor is taking its first steps in the community of nations as a result of the democratic exercise of the right to self-determination, and we congratulate it.

Today the peoples of Latin America extend a brotherly hand to the Timorese people. The Rio Group congratulates in particular the new President of East Timor, Mr. Xanana Gusmão, on his election to lead the destiny of his nation at this crucial time. The independence of East Timor is the result of a long effort that has required the broad participation of its population. The countries members of the Rio Group, which have always supported the legitimate aspirations of the Timorese people, are delighted to see the successful conclusion of those efforts.

Independence gives East Timor a new status, a new dignity and new rights. But it also imposes new responsibilities and obligations on its Government. We know that the task confronting the new Government of East Timor is enormous: to rebuild its economy and society following the tragic events that occurred at the end of 1999; to consolidate a democratic system that is respectful of human rights; to create effective administrative and judicial institutions; to coordinate the development efforts and the administration of the natural resources of the new nation; to develop existing human resources and to strengthen them through education and health programmes; and to be effectively integrated into the international community.

Among these tasks, the Rio Group attaches highest priority to that of consolidating, preserving and promoting democracy and human rights in East Timor, since these are the indispensable prerequisite for ensuring justice, equity, freedom, peace and sustainable development for all the people. At the same time, the new authorities must emphasize the development and implementation of education, health, housing and poverty-reduction programmes.

The countries members of the Rio Group appreciate the excellent work of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, in the preparation of East Timor's independence, the holding of the first elections, the drafting of the new constitution and the creation of the new nation's basic administrative and political structures. We hope that the lessons learned in this effort at peace-building will be effectively incorporated in the practice of the Security Council. Nonetheless, the task is not over. The international community must continue to support the Government and the people of East Timor.

In the short term, East Timor needs the political, military and financial support of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the international community in general. The Rio Group supports the mandate of the new Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), which is aimed at ensuring the stability and viability of the new political and administrative structures, the training of the Police Service, the administration of justice and security of the population. We welcome the appointment of Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma to head the Mission.

In the medium term, East Timor needs a strong flow of investment and development assistance with a view to ensuring the economic viability and political stability of the new State. During the second stage, focusing on the economic development of East Timor, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic and Social Council must play a fundamental role in coordinating the work of the international community.

The independence of East Timor is an example of the success and effectiveness of the work of the United Nations when it is backed by the resources and political support of all its Members. Today is a joyful day not only for East Timor but also for the entire international community. We hope that it will soon be possible to celebrate the admission of East Timor to the United Nations as one more Member State.

This concludes my statement on behalf of the States members of the Rio Group. My next comments will be made in my national capacity on behalf of Costa Rica.

The people and the Government of Costa Rica wish to convey sincerest congratulations to the people and the Government of East Timor on the occasion of their independence. The Timorese people can henceforth rely on the fraternal friendship and firm solidarity of the people of Costa Rica.

As I said in my statement on behalf of the Rio Group, the tasks of economic development and the consolidation of the political system confronting the new Government are enormous. Regrettably, the resources available, both at the local and international levels, are limited and insufficient. The new Government will have to wisely design its development priorities and the corresponding budgetary allocations.

Like East Timor, Costa Rica is a small developing country, and it has therefore confronted similar challenges. More than 50 years ago, our country discovered that the resources devoted to defence were a heavy burden on our national economy and that this limited our possibilities for progress. Developing countries that are truly committed to the well-being of their people cannot afford to waste scarce resources on armies or weapons. On the contrary, we need to devote our meagre resources to economic development, social justice and democratic institution-building. Furthermore, the existence of armies has harmful political and social effects. Unfortunately, armed forces are frequently sources of tension, repression and violations of democratic principles. They exacerbate conflicts, promote the arms race and make it difficult to resolve disputes peacefully. Many armies violate human rights and radicalize various sectors of society.

In this context, Costa Rica notes the creation of the East Timor Defence Force. My country would have preferred to see the birth of East Timor as an independent nation without an army. We believe that the Security Council, UNTAET, UNMISET and the other multilateral collective security mechanisms are the real guarantors of the independence of East Timor. The new nation consequently does not need armed forces to feel secure. We would have preferred the Security Council to discourage the creation of the Defence Force and resolutely to promote the creation of a culture of peace in East Timor. We therefore invite the new Government of East Timor to abolish its Defence Force and courageously to allocate the largest possible sum of resources to the economic and social development of its people.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): May I, at the outset, echo the comments made by others about our pleasure at seeing you, Sir, here in the Chair today. It is appropriate not only because of Singapore's role in the region and as a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), but also, as others have said, because of the role that Singapore has played within the Council on East Timor. I would again wish to express our appreciation to Ambassador Mahbubani for his role in this respect.

Today, 20 May, does indeed mark a historic day, as we welcome the most recent member of the community of nations. As we meet here in New York to mark this occasion, more than 80 country delegations have gathered in Dili to participate in and celebrate East Timor's passage to independence. The New Zealand Prime Minister is very pleased to be amongst them.

Achieving this day has not been without significant cost to the people of East Timor. Vivid memories remain of the violence which followed the ballot in which the East Timorese people expressed their overwhelming desire for independence. How far East Timor has come in that short period is testament to the will of its people and to the commitment of the international community, through its support for the United Nations role of partnership with the East Timorese people. That partnership will continue after today but will change in nature as the overall United Nations footprint is reduced with regard to security, governance, reconstruction and development support functions.

The people of East Timor should rightly savour this new-found sovereignty. Political sovereignty is however interwoven with the pursuit of economic independence. It is as much these economic challenges that will test the East Timorese leadership as the need to entrench and nurture its fledgling democracy.

It is clear, however, that on both the political and the economic fronts, East Timor has many friends in the region and around the world. The entire United Nations operation — from the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) through the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and now to United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) — could not have made the progress now evident without the United Nations membership showing its clear willingness to support and directly assist East Timor.

Those friendships will, over the next two to three years, take on a different dimension as countries establish relationships directly with the Government of East Timor. Those relationships will form the core around which East Timor will find its place in the global community, and will go some considerable way, particularly in these early years, in helping East Timor chart its own path towards political and economic sovereignty. We very much welcome the news which the Deputy Secretary-General gave us this morning about East Timor's application for United Nations membership.

Others before me have referred to the crucial role played by individuals in Dili and here in New York in getting us to the point where we are today. I shall not repeat their names, but I would very much like to express our appreciation for the key role that United Nations staff have played in getting us here. The Government and the people of New Zealand have been pleased to play a part in this process. We very much wish East Timor well.

The President: I thank the representative of New Zealand for his kind words addressed to me and to my delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nepal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): It is our privilege to have the Foreign Minister of Singapore presiding over this very important and timely open meeting of the Security Council to mark the independence of East Timor.

Today, a new nation has emerged from the blue and often turbulent waters of the South Pacific. East Timor has broken out of a cage of history in which it was trapped for centuries and has taken the first flight of freedom into the open blue sky. East Timor's independence is a dream come true for its people. On this very happy occasion the Government and people of Nepal most heartily congratulate the newly elected President, Mr. Xanana Gusmão, and the Government and people of East Timor at their monumental achievement and join them in celebrating this exhilarating moment.

Nepal welcomes East Timor into the community of nations with open arms as an equal and respected member. We profoundly commend the dedication and sacrifice of the people of East Timor that made their freedom possible.

Like so many other countries, Nepal is proud to have been involved, through its participation in peacekeeping, in the evolution of a free nation. Private Devi Ram Jaishi nurtured the sapling of East Timor by making the ultimate sacrifice. So many other young men and women made their invaluable contributions under United Nations auspices to make this dream come true. I pay tribute to Private Jaishi and other heroes from around the world whose sacrifice and dedication helped make possible the dream of independence for East Timor. I also commend the United Nations for its untiring effort to make this happen. I appreciate the Government of Indonesia for respecting the will of the East Timorese people.

The chapter on the birth of a free nation has come to a happy close with the independence ceremony concluded in Dili Sunday night. There are many chapters yet to be written in a long history that awaits East Timor. They must be chapters on durable peace, sustained democracy and freedom, and sustainable economic and social development. I call on the international community to assist East Timor to write those chapters.

Nepal remains committed to contributing in whatever way it can to make East Timor a viable, vibrant and stable State, one able to stand on its own feet and pursue peace and development. That is why we are committed to continuing with the successor mission to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor.

I wish the Government and people of East Timor success in meeting the challenges before them on the way to forging a peaceful, prosperous and just society in the new nation.

The President: I thank the representative of Nepal for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Philippines. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Yuchengco (Philippines): First of all, Mr. President, I convey our appreciation in seeing you chair today's meeting. I wish also to thank you and members of the Security Council for the opportunity to address this body on this historic day. It is fitting that the celebration in Dili is extended today in this Chamber by the members of the United Nations, who have been instrumental in steering the events that now culminate in the declaration of independence of East Timor.

The Philippine delegation welcomes the newest independent State, East Timor, into the family of nations. We extend our hand of friendship to the people of East Timor, who, after years of struggle, are taking the rewarding journey towards independent nationhood. The Philippines looks forward to fruitful cooperation with East Timor, and we eagerly anticipate welcoming this young nation into the United Nations family.

As we take time to deliberate and contemplate on what is a United Nations success story in East Timor, I wish to make the following points.

First, the efforts of the international community in resolving the problem in East Timor would have been found wanting and short on results had it not been for the courage, the vision and the commitment of the people of East Timor to achieve independence.

Secondly, with principles and values overcoming force and violence in East Timor, we have learned that independence and freedom can be pursued through peaceful and democratic means. Despite adversities, the Timorese people have triumphed and achieved their goal of independence. By staying the course, the international community has helped found East Timor on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. A precious legacy has been left to the freedom-loving people of East Timor.

Thirdly, the success of the United Nations in East Timor has been a collective one. Countries big and small have contributed personnel and resources to reach the goals set by the United Nations. Moreover, the remarkably short transition period towards East Timor's independence has also been due to the professionalism and dedication of the international civil servants from the top leadership to the rank and file, who served tirelessly in Dili, New York and other parts of the region.

Finally, the United Nations Mission in East Timor was one of the first, if not the only, mission to date for which a clear exit strategy has been established. Not unlike a solitary lighthouse that guides ships in the expanse of a dark ocean, the well-defined exit strategy in East Timor has served as a robust incentive to help the United Nations achieve its goals. We commend the Security Council for its leadership in this regard.

While nothing should distract us from contemplating our success in East Timor, we should maintain our focus on the enormous tasks that lie ahead. The Timorese people will continue to require assistance from the international community to ensure the stability and viability of their country. We thus support the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), especially its goal to help East Timor attain full self-governance at the earliest possible time. Just as we supported the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor at its inception, having deployed troops and provided its first Force Commander, we shall participate in UNMISET in the same spirit.

The Philippines will also remain engaged in the capacity-building efforts of East Timor. I thus wish to inform this meeting that the Philippine Government will co-sponsor a package of human resource development projects for East Timor within the framework of the Philippines-Japan Partnership Program. We wish all the best for the Government of President Gusmão and, in this regard, I wish to quote the message to him of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo:

> "East Timor can count on the continued support of the Philippines for that country's efforts to achieve peace and prosperity, in the same manner that the Philippines stood by and supported East Timor in its quest for democracy."

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are deeply honoured that the Foreign

Minister of Singapore is presiding over this important meeting.

Today is an historic day for East Timor and for the United Nations. It is above all a time to rejoice as East Timor celebrates its first day of independence. Cuba has expressed its wish to establish diplomatic relations with East Timor and to develop lasting bonds of friendship and cooperation with that country. We are particularly pleased at the fact that, on its very first day as an independent State, East Timor has formally requested admission as the 190th State Member of the United Nations. We are certain that this request will enjoy the full support of all.

Many difficult challenges lie ahead for the newly independent State. That is why it will continue to need the careful attention, assistance and cooperation of the international community, including the United Nations. The United Nations must remain in East Timor for as long as is necessary — no more and no less. The planning that has been done for the United Nations presence in East Timor over the next two years is prudent and timely. The Secretary-General could not have made a better choice than that of Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma to head the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, which is formally established as of today. Aware of his skills and dedication, we are convinced that Ambassador Sharma will successfully fulfil his new responsibility.

The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, of which Cuba is a founding member, had the situation of East Timor on its agenda for many years. We are gratified that the efforts of the Committee are recognized in the presidential statement to be adopted by the Security Council today.

The maintenance of harmonious relations between East Timor and its neighbours will be of great importance to the stability and prosperity of the region. In that respect, we wish to recognize the role played by Indonesia in the peace process and its support of the United Nations work in East Timor. We note with satisfaction the full readiness of both parties to resolve pending issues and to build a relationship of partnership, cooperation and friendship.

Speaking before the Security Council on 26 April, both President Xanana Gusmão and Chief Minister Alkatiri emphasized the need for international support in several areas of great importance to East Timor. In concrete response to those appeals, Cuba is opening the necessary contacts with the Government of East Timor in order to offer assistance in various areas. The Cuban delegation attending the proclamation of independence ceremonies will submit to the East Timorese authorities a number of concrete proposals for bilateral assistance and cooperation.

In conclusion, I wish on behalf of my country, the greatest of success to the entire Government and people of East Timor and to assure them that they can always count on Cuba's support and solidarity.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I thank you very much, Sir, for organizing this public meeting on East Timor. It is indeed befitting that we gather here under your presidency. Singapore has always played a central role in keeping East Timor among the priorities of this Council.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Costa Rica this morning on behalf of the Rio Group.

Today is a day for commemoration and we should not forget that to commemorate means to honour the memory of someone. We commemorate all those in East Timor and abroad who endured years of exile, deprivation and sacrifice or paid the ultimate price to attain self-determination.

Today is a day for celebration and festivities and to express joy for the realization of the right of a people to statehood. The dream of self-determination came true after a long and sometimes fierce fight that mobilized an entire people. Brazil joins the international community in welcoming East Timor to the family of nations. This is a warm and wholehearted welcome that comes from all those whose hearts and minds were captured by the heroism of a resolute people.

Today is also a day to pause and to think about the formidable challenges that lie ahead. In this sense, it is a moment to renew the hope for a better future. Independence is a fundamental step, but it is also a new beginning, the starting point for another long journey.

The historic birth of independent East Timor would not have been possible without the sacrifice of many East Timorese and the solidarity of the international community. The United Nations played a pivotal role in bringing East Timor to independence. The example of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) shows that the United Nations can muster political will and harness financial and human resources in an effective way, thus making a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable.

The tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations in East Timor are by no means over. The success of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) will require the same level of political commitment that characterized the support for UNTAET. It is important to convey a clear message of encouragement for the East Timorese people. Independence Day represents the launching of a new phase in which our steadfast cooperation in a vast array of critical areas will be required to underpin the exercise of sovereignty by the East Timorese. Our enthusiasm for the independence of East Timor must not lead to complacency. We should not lose sight of the huge problems awaiting the new Government just around the corner.

East Timor is a developing country in need of international assistance. In that context, it becomes even more pressing to continue to bring on a stream of income-generating projects, to maintain the flow of international aid and to create the conditions for sustainable development. In other words, the international community must continue to provide generous support for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of East Timor, bearing in mind the continuing need for financial, material and technical support for that country's development.

As Sergio Vieira de Mello stated recently, with independence comes great responsibility. The leaders of East Timor know that the effort to build functioning economic and political systems does not depend only on international aid. The political parties and the leaders also have to undertake a serious effort in order to make the State of East Timor work for each and every citizen. Given the political maturity already demonstrated by the political leaders in East Timor, Brazil is confident that democracy will continue to flourish and thrive through the people's vibrant participation in the affairs of the community. It is important to maintain and consolidate the institutions that uphold the rule of law, ensure the peaceful settlement of disputes, favour accountable and transparent governance and provide for the basic needs of the people in areas such as health and education.

Allow me to pay tribute once again to my fellow countryman, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who served as the head of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Under his competent and dependable guidance, UNTAET turned out to be an unprecedented achievement in the history of the United Nations. We are grateful for what Mr. Vieira de Mello was able to accomplish, together with the people and the leadership of East Timor and the dedicated staff of UNTAET. The spirit of sacrifice of highly motivated international civil servants, like Mr. Vieira de Mello and his staff, provides a vivid example of how to put into practice the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Brazil welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma of India as the head of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). We wish Ambassador Sharma every success in his new duties.

Let me conclude by expressing to the East Timorese people and Government of Brazil's best wishes for progress, well-being and happiness. It is our sincere hope that the birth of the new State will represent the dawn of an era of peace and prosperity in East Timor. We look forward to working side by side with East Timor in the United Nations and in the community of Portuguese-speaking countries.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Thailand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): I am particularly delighted and honoured to see you, Sir, preside over this Security Council meeting. Allow me, therefore, to pay tribute to you and to Singapore, Thailand's close Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) partner, for guiding the work of the Council this month.

The convening of this meeting could not have been more timely. With the independence celebrations in East Timor today, Thailand joins the world community in welcoming the Democratic Republic of East Timor as the newest member of the family of

nations. We wish once again to congratulate the people of East Timor and their first President for their show of resolve in fulfilling their aspirations.

This momentous event also marks the culmination of concerted efforts among members of the international community, the United Nations and the people and the leadership of East Timor themselves. In the light of this United Nations success story, I wish to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General and to the outstanding leadership of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello in steering the work of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in East Timor. No less could be said of the tireless efforts and the determination of all UNTAET personnel, which were evident in the seamless transition of responsibilities to the leadership and national institutions of East Timor. As for Thailand, we take pride in the role of Thai military personnel as part of the United Nations Mission in East Timor from the very beginning — since the inception of the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET), some two and a half years ago.

It is heartening to learn of the recent successful donors conference whereby Governments and aid agencies pledged more than $360 million to support East Timor's economic development over the next three years. That commendable gesture should be complemented by the accelerated disbursement of commitments. It is also essential that financial discipline be strictly maintained, with priority placed on funding East Timor's National Development Plan. These are challenges that remain in post-independence East Timor, and they require the support and the continued engagement of the international community and the United Nations before the country can become self-sustaining in its political, economic and cultural development.

We also welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 1410 (2002), establishing a successor mission to UNTAET — the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) — and stand ready to offer our cooperation to the Mission. The maintenance of law and order, especially the development of the East Timor Police Service, is undoubtedly a main priority. Equally important however, is the coordinating role that UNMISET must play in consolidating the various assistance programmes with other United Nations specialized agencies, donor countries and international financial institutions in order to create an enabling environment whereby East Timor, over time, can participate in the regional and the global economy on an equal footing.

I was pleased to hear what the Secretary-General said in Dili yesterday. "The United Nations will stay", he said, adding, "Your friends around the world will continue to help". Heeding the Secretary-General's statement that the international community must ensure that the investment it has made in East Timor does not go to waste, Thailand, for its part, will continue to render support through its contribution of personnel in UNMISET and the provision of appropriate technical assistance on a bilateral basis or through tripartite arrangements. Bearing that in mind, Thailand will lend its full support to UNMISET, which has a distinct role in preparing East Timor for the responsibilities and obligations of statehood.

It remains for me to announce that Thailand today established diplomatic relations with East Timor, which will be followed by the exchange of diplomatic representatives in due course. We welcome East Timor's decision to seek observer status in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). We also eagerly await the day when we welcome East Timor as a member of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Thailand for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Venezuela. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Pulido Santana (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, let me express my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, preside over this important Council meeting. In taking the floor, I should like to say that we subscribe to Costa Rica's statement on behalf of the Rio Group.

Venezuela joins in the international community's jubilation at the emergence of East Timor as a new, full-fledged and sovereign member of this community. We believe that, for the United Nations in particular, that event represents the satisfaction of having fulfilled in the framework of its purposes, one of the goals for which it exists.

On this date of such importance for the East Timorese and of shared celebration for all democratic countries of the world, we wish to extend a message of friendship and cooperation to the people and the

Government of East Timor; we share their confidence and natural optimism in their present and future.

The President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Hugo Chávez Frías, who had the great honour of being invited by the Secretary-General to the ceremonial proclamation of the independence of East Timor deeply regrets that he was unable to be personally present on this historic occasion, although that was his intention. A mission led by our Ambassador in Jakarta is attending this historic event to bear witness to our country's support.

Venezuela, as a member of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, is particularly gratified at these first steps towards an institutional life now being taken by the people of East Timor. That important development undoubtedly constitutes a new milestone in the history of the struggle of the United Nations for the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination.

Naturally, many challenges lie ahead for the new nation. We are confident that the maturity it has achieved will enable it, with the cooperation and assistance of the international community and with the continued support of the United Nations, to deal with the varied problems that still exist and with those that the newly independent nation will have to face.

It is encouraging to see that East Timor is already taking its first steps towards, and is beginning to plan for, laying the solid foundations of its economy through the sovereign exploitation of its natural resources.

We are also confident that the same courage and steadfastness that have led the East Timorese people to the threshold of peace and democracy will also prove fundamental as they carry out the tasks of building their new country. Peace and democracy must be accompanied by resolute and generous support from the international community, particularly from the international financial institutions, in order to ensure the success of those tasks and to make East Timor a viable State.

I would not wish to conclude without expressing our congratulations to the Government of President Gusmão and to the new national leaders. I also wish to reiterate our appreciation to all those bodies and officials of the United Nations that made a decisive contribution so that East Timor would today be able to proclaim its independence. We especially wish to express our thanks to the Council, over which you, Sir, are so honourably presiding, to the General Assembly, to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and all his staff, and to all those who preceded him in the Secretariat and who played a very active and key role in the negotiations.

We are convinced that the United Nations will continue its invaluable assistance to the new sovereign State through the successor mission established by resolution 1410 (2002). We hope to welcome East Timor as a new Member of the United Nations family at the next session of the General Assembly.

The President: I thank the representative of Venezuela for the kind words she addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Republic of Korea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea): We are very grateful to you, Mr. Jayakumar, Foreign Minister of Singapore, for presiding over this historic meeting of the Security Council today to mark the independence of East Timor. I would like to pay tribute to you and to the Singaporean presidency for successfully guiding the Security Council during the month of May. We welcome the fact that under Singapore's leadership, the Security Council has been moving towards greater openness in its work.

Today, 20 May, is a time for celebration. After centuries of sufferings and devastation, East Timor has now emerged as a free, independent State. On this delightful occasion, I extend, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea, my deepest congratulations to the leaders and the people of East Timor.

Over the past two and a half years, the United Nations has exercised competence and robustness in helping to convert into reality the East Timorese people's aspiration to independence. In that regard, my delegation admires the unreserved dedication of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and of all other members of the

United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET).

With independence, the role of the United Nations in East Timor is being transformed from one of administration to one of support. My delegation welcomes and fully supports Security Council resolution 1410 (2002), adopted unanimously last Friday, which details the establishment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), the successor mission to the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNTAET), for an initial period of 12 months. We are fully confident that UNMISET will fulfil its mandate successfully under the able leadership of Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma.

This day of East Timorese independence holds special significance for my country, as I am sure it does for many others. The Republic of Korea has been actively contributing to East Timor's transition to an independent State. Based on our firm commitment to democracy and human rights, we have been participating in international efforts at nation-building in East Timor by extending humanitarian and development assistance, by taking part in election monitoring and, above all, by dispatching a significant number of peacekeeping battalions to the military component of UNTAET.

Today, the Republic of Korea has established full, ambassadorial-level diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Building on those formal bilateral relations, we will continue to strengthen our ties with East Timor not only in political and economic areas but also in social, cultural and other fields.

The Republic of Korea remains committed to joining in the efforts of the international community to ensure democracy and prosperity in the new State of East Timor. As far as our participation in UNMISET is concerned, the Republic of Korea will continue to contribute peacekeeping troops to the United Nations Mission until its mandate is accomplished.

It gives us great pleasure to welcome East Timor to the community of nations. We expect it to join the United Nations as soon as is practicable. The Government of the Republic of Korea very much looks forward to working closely with the Government of East Timor in the international arena.

The President: I thank the Representative of the Republic of Korea for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jamaica. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which are Members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and my own country, Jamaica.

We are particularly pleased to see you, the Foreign Minister of Singapore, a country with which all CARICOM States have close relations, presiding over today's historic meeting of the Security Council to celebrate the independence of a new small island developing State: East Timor. We also wish to express our appreciation to the Singapore team for the efficient manner in which it has led the Council during this month.

CARICOM joins the rest of the international community in celebrating the long-awaited inclusion of East Timor in the family of nations. This momentous event marks the culmination of a long and arduous struggle by the people of East Timor. As an association of countries that have long supported the people of East Timor in their quest for independence, CARICOM is pleased that the people of East Timor have now achieved their objective. We are confident that they will embark on the task of nation-building with their characteristic vigour and strength of determination.

CARICOM also congratulates President Gusmão and Prime Minister Alkatiri on their election to the high offices of Government. At the same time, we remember all those other East Timorese who did not live to see this day, but whose vision, leadership and sacrifice started the country on its path to self-determination and freedom.

CARICOM is proud of the part played by the international community in assisting the people of East Timor towards self-determination and independence. The United Nations in particular, through the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), performed a laudable role. The timely attention paid by the United Nations to East Timor in

the period leading up to and following the referendum in 1999 and in the monitoring of the electoral process in 2001 and 2002 for the Constituent Assembly and general elections respectively exemplifies the commitment of the international community to promoting the principles of democracy and good governance in East Timor.

The Security Council should also be recognized for its pivotal role in promoting stability in East Timor, beginning with its timely mission, led by Ambassador Martin Andjaba of Namibia, following the referendum in 1999.

The international community also owes a debt of gratitude to those countries that provided military and civilian personnel to the International Force in East Timor and to UNTAET. We especially remember those who paid the ultimate price in the service of peace.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his Special Representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello, are to be commended for ensuring that dialogue and conciliation have been pre-eminent in the process of transition in East Timor and for assisting the people in developing structures of Government that will serve them well as an independent nation. We wish to place on record our appreciation to the men and women of UNTAET for their dedication to their tasks.

At the same time, greatest credit must go to the people of East Timor, who have shown unflagging support for the democratic process. They now face the challenging task of nation-building to consolidate the gains of independence and to sustain democratic and economic viability. It is therefore important for the international community to maintain its assistance to the people of East Timor.

The United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) will play a vital role in the development of viable administrative structures crucial to the stability and development of the new State by providing assistance in areas relating to security and capacity-building. We take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Kamalesh Sharma on his appointment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor, and we wish him every success in his assignment.

The pledges of support totalling over $360 million made recently at the international donors conference will assist in providing an enabling environment for the reconstruction and the sustainable development of East Timor. CARICOM urges that this assistance be disbursed expeditiously.

In conclusion, let me again express CARICOM's congratulations to the people of East Timor on this, their independence day. We look forward to welcoming East Timor as the one hundred ninetieth State Member of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Jamaica for her kind words addressed to me and to my delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): My delegation deems it a distinct honour to see the Foreign Minister of a neighbouring country member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, with which Indonesia enjoys close and friendly relations, presiding over these important deliberations.

It is indeed a great pleasure for my delegation to participate in this open meeting of Security Council to commemorate a real milestone event: the birth of East Timor as a fully fledged sovereign and independent nation. Indeed, this is a historic occasion that will be forever etched in East Timor's history as a defining moment, whereby its newly inaugurated President, Xanana Gusmão, and the East Timorese Government have become the masters of their people's destiny, enabling them to follow the path to their chosen goals.

Allow me in particular to pay special tribute to President Xanana Gusmão, who has already proven to be a visionary statesman, particularly in valiantly promoting reconciliation among the East Timorese people and in committing himself to building a secure and prosperous nation. Our congratulations also go to the East Timorese people themselves on their unstinting efforts to attain independence by democratic means.

In reaching that objective, credit no doubt goes to the effort of the Secretary-General and to the pivotal role of the United Nations. We commend in particular the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), under the leadership of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, for assisting the people of East Timor in the transition to independence.

For its part, my Government will continue to extend its cooperation to the newly established United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) in its mandate to strengthen an environment for the nation-building of East Timor. In this regard, the international community should render its support to the Governments of Indonesia and of East Timor in realizing this objective.

Similarly, my Government is committed to expanding bilateral relations with East Timor. It will endeavour to find ways and means to explore new areas of cooperation so as to inject greater vitality into our bilateral relations. A significant step was taken in that direction with the visit of President Megawati Soekarnoputri to East Timor today, 20 May 2002, to participate in the independence day celebration. This has indeed added momentum to further building an edifice of enhanced bilateral relations between our two countries and towards realizing our commitment to implementing forward-looking relations with East Timor.

In that context, it is important that the international community continue its support to help East Timor become a solid and prosperous country, which will in turn enhance the stability of the region as a whole.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Brunei Darussalam. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Serbini (Brunei Darussalam): Mr. President, it is an honour for us to have you preside over this Council meeting. We believe that, under your guidance, we will have fruitful and successful deliberations.

This is a happy day for us, and more so for the people of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. On behalf of the Government and people of Brunei Darussalam, I would like to convey our warmest congratulations to the Government and people of East Timor on their independence. On this historic day, I am pleased to inform the Council that the Governments of Brunei Darussalam and the Democratic Republic of East Timor have agreed to establish diplomatic relations. On the same note, we look forward to welcoming East Timor as a new member of this community of nations.

Contributions by the United Nations and by Member States have been commendable and crucial to bringing us and East Timor to the point we have reached now. We are pleased with the way the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) discharged its mandate and its contribution to peace and stability in East Timor. We are seeing continued progress, which has been reflected in the Secretary-General's reports. We commend Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and his team for their outstanding work.

Brunei Darussalam welcomes the Council's approval last Friday of the establishment of a United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). At this juncture, let me also congratulate Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor, and we are confident that he will continue building on the success of his predecessor.

Finally, we believe that the new mission will continue the consolidation of what has already been invested in East Timor by UNTAET, as well as by previous missions. It confirms that the continued international presence in East Timor is crucial for its rehabilitation and development. UNMISET's mandate and practical exit strategy will enhance East Timor's capacity for self-government and its ability to become a viable State within the international community.

The President: I thank the representative of Brunei Darussalam for his kind words addressed to me. The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malaysia, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): Mr. President, my delegation is pleased to see you, Mr. Minister, presiding over this important public meeting of the Council this morning. It is fitting that Singapore, a neighbour of East Timor, is presiding on this auspicious occasion. My delegation also appreciates the fact that you have graciously allowed non-members of the Council to speak before it.

My delegation expresses its appreciation to you and to the Council for this opportunity to address it on the occasion of the independence of East Timor. It is indeed appropriate for the Council to commemorate

this important event by convening this formal meeting, given the fact that East Timor has been an active item on the agenda of the Council these past few years and that the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) is one of the great success stories of United Nations peacekeeping missions in recent times. Having been associated with the establishment of UNTAET when Malaysia was a member of this Council two years ago, including its participation in the two missions sent by the Council to East Timor, my country is gratified at the successful outcome of the United Nations process. We join Council members and the rest of the international community in congratulating the people of East Timor on the achievement of their independence, which was proclaimed in Dili last night. We look forward to formally welcoming the Democratic Republic of East Timor into the family of nations at the next session of the General Assembly.

We are pleased that in spite of the many challenges and difficulties it had to face, UNTAET was able to fulfil its mandate successfully. This is due in no small measure to the strong commitment to and support of the people of East Timor by the international community, particularly this Council. Thanks must also go to those donor countries and to the United Nations and other international agencies that have played significant roles in the rehabilitation of the country in preparation for its independence. We must also not forget the positive and constructive role of Indonesia in the United Nations process, which has expedited the successful implementation of the mandate of UNTAET. However, most of all, credit and praise must go to the people of East Timor themselves and their leaders for putting aside personal and group interests in the larger interests of their nascent nation. Their wisdom, political maturity and unwavering commitment to their nation, over and above selfish personal and group interests, have served their country well during its period of tutelage under the United Nations and augur well for the future progress and well-being of East Timor in the post-independence period.

As we rejoice with the people of East Timor over the birth of their nation, we must be mindful, as are the people of East Timor themselves, of the many challenges that will confront the young nation in the years ahead. Many of these challenges have been highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report of 17 April, 2002. Among these are enhancing the young nation's capacity-building in many areas of development and building a professional and effective public administration and judicial system, as well as a viable defence force and police force. UNTAET has provided important foundations for a viable nation, but more needs to be done in the immediate post-independence period. All of this will require the strenuous efforts of the East Timorese people and the continued support of the international community, especially that of the United Nations.

Malaysia has made some modest contributions to this process and will continue to do so in the future. We have also consistently and strongly supported a continuing and credible presence of the United Nations in East Timor after independence and are gratified at the establishment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) under the leadership of Ambassador Sharma. Its presence for an appropriate period will serve as an important symbol and guarantee of continuing international commitment to and support for East Timor. Malaysia is therefore pleased to contribute to UNMISET a total of 16 military observers, 20 interpreters and 43 civilian police.

The future success and prosperity of East Timor will also hinge on a number of other factors, not the least of which is the unity and cohesion of its people. Such unity, premised on the national reconciliation of the East Timorese people, is particularly important given its history of divisiveness and violence over the past two decades. We welcome the steps already taken towards national reconciliation, including the commendable initiative by President Xanana Gusmão, when he visited and dialogued with the refugees in West Timor. We believe his statesmanlike initiative was a step in the right direction and will go a long way in ensuring the success of national reconciliation efforts. We would encourage him and his Government to undertake these and other worthwhile efforts in bringing his people together and in healing the wounds of the past, for the sake of the unity and cohesion of the East Timorese people.

In congratulating the people of East Timor and wishing them every success as an independent nation, Malaysia looks forward to its playing its full and active part as a member of the family of nations. We look forward to forging close and mutually beneficial relations, both bilaterally and in the context of the region to which we belong. Indeed, we look forward to

its steady integration into the life and activities of the region. In this and in other efforts, the Government and people of East Timor can count on the support and friendship of all of its neighbours, including my own country.

In conclusion, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, for his leadership, commitment and tireless efforts in steering East Timor towards nationhood and to the entire personnel of UNTAET, civilian as well as military, for their outstanding contribution to the people of East Timor.

Mr. Chungong (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I am especially happy to take the floor today on this solemn meeting of the Council to welcome the new, independent State of East Timor. First of all, let me join preceding delegations in wishing you, Sir, welcome in New York and in telling you how joyful we are to see you preside over our work on this exceptional day.

My delegation congratulates the new Timorese authorities on this historic day, especially the new President, Mr. Xanana Gusmão. His vision and spirit of tolerance and openness will be useful to his country to consolidate peace, security and the national development of East Timor and the relations of this young nation with its neighbours, in particular Indonesia.

On 17 May, we voted for a resolution, which created the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). This Mission succeeds the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). It is once again time to pay an enthusiastic tribute to Mr. Vieira de Mello, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNTAET, whose mission is ending today, and to all civilian and military staff of UNTAET for the work they have done and their tremendous success.

This positive outcome of the question of East Timor that we are celebrating today has caught all the sceptics out, since it clearly shows the ability of the Security Council to ensure peace and security with substantive results in a reasonable time frame.

A new day has dawned on East Timor, henceforth an independent State. My delegation confirms that it will join with the other Members of the United Nations to support the speedy admission of this country as a Member of our Organization. In addition, we are prepared to forge bonds of multifaceted cooperation with the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

It is clear that the work accomplished will not be able to thrive unless the international community strengthens its technical and financial assistance to this young State, making sure that there is good coordination of all actions on the part of the donors, both bilateral and multilateral. From this standpoint, we support the decision of the Secretary-General to make his Resident Coordinator in Dili the Deputy Special Representative for East Timor as of tomorrow.

The economic and social development of East Timor requires, first of all, complete pacification inside the country and on its borders. The new United Nations Mission will have a delicate and critical role along these lines. It is fortunate that the new Special Representative is Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, who is a person of experience and great competence. His attributes will be very appropriate in order to complete his mission. My delegation fully supports the draft statement that he will make in a little while and which deals with the concerns that I have just stated.

To conclude, I would like to renew to the new authorities and people of East Timor all of our good wishes for peace and success as an independent State. They have the ability and the will to make of their country a land of success. I can only wish them a fair journey.

The President: I thank the representative of Cameroon for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*) I am pleased to welcome you, Sir, here in New York. I would like to extend my thanks to you for presiding over this public meeting of the Security Council. I would also like to express my thanks to Ambassador Mahbubani and his mission for the very good preparations they made for this open meeting.

This historic day — commemorating the independence of East Timor, which has completed its path towards self-determination and whose courageous struggle to attain freedom and independence has been crowned with success — serves as a prominent example of how a State can be established in accordance with the wishes and struggle of a people and with the decisive support of the entire international

community. I am pleased on this happy occasion to express to the people and Government of East Timor the congratulations of the people and Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and our wishes for this nascent State in the new millennium for full success in bringing about development and stability.

On this day, too, we turn a new leaf in the history of the United Nations — a page distinguished by unusual collaborative efforts to bring about peace in East Timor and to set a firm basis for the establishment of the country. Therefore, the United Nations, with all its different agencies and bodies, fully deserves all congratulations for this historic success. I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to commend the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) for its endeavours in East Timor and for the dedication and sincerity it showed under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, in providing assistance to the people of East Timor during the period of transition to independence.

One reason for our welcome is the commitment of the leaders of East Timor to lead the country in a spirit of collaboration and national pride, while seeking to take practical steps towards establishing close and strong relations with neighbouring States, especially with its closest and most important neighbour, Indonesia, which has declared its readiness to collaborate with East Timor to build a society in which peace, unity and continuity prevail.

We believe that this historic achievement would not have been possible without constant understanding and cooperation on the part of the Indonesian Government and its initiatives to find ways of settling pending issues. We heard, a while ago, the friendly representative of Indonesia, who emphasized the commitment of his Government to continue to expand relations with East Timor. It is worth mentioning the importance of providing the necessary assistance for East Timor in the post-independence period to safeguard ongoing progress in development and in promoting basic infrastructures and public administration and the capacities for law enforcement and defence.

We are fully confident that UNMISET, established in accordance with resolution 1410 (2002) of 17 May 2002, will help to promote and strengthen a stable environment in East Timor and will provide further evidence of the commitment of the United Nations and of East Timor's Government and people to continue to work towards progress in promoting State and law enforcement. We are fully confident that Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma will lead this Mission to success in a manner that serves the interests of a nascent East Timor.

I wish to conclude by saying that we look forward to the occasion when East Timor will become a Member of the United Nations and its flag will fly high with the other flags of United Nations Member States. We look forward to cooperating with its representatives. We wish this country all success, progress and prosperity.

The President: I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: We believe that holding this solemn meeting today in the Security Council under your leadership, Mr. President, gives it even further significance. It is highly symbolic that the meeting is taking place under the presidency of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of one of the countries in the region, where a new State has just been born.

The Russian Federation would like to join in congratulating the East Timorese people, who have just achieved the independence of their country through peaceful and democratic means. In the case of East Timor, our Organization has acquired a truly unique experience, one which includes assisting to organize an across-the-board survey of the people on the status of the territory, a peacekeeping operation, assisting in the preparations for independence, and subsequent assistance in establishing this new State. This experience will certainly go down in history as a clear example of a successful United Nations action. We also believe it necessary to pay tribute to the tremendous work done by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) under the creative and skilful leadership of Sergio Vieira de Mello.

During the Security Council meeting on 26 April the Russian delegation had the opportunity to congratulate the President-elect of East Timor, His Excellency Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, on his victory in the elections and to voice the hope that the country's

leadership would demonstrate unity and continue on the road to establishing harmonious relations with neighbouring countries.

We understand that the institutions established in East Timor are not yet on a firm foundation, and it is very obvious — especially in this initial period, after proclamation of East Timor's independence — that the world community will need to provide support to this newest State in the world. We believe that a central role in international support for establishing East Timorese statehood, and also for coordinating that international support, must be played by the United Nations system. We welcome adoption of the Security Council resolution establishing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). We believe that the goals assigned to the Mission respond to the critical challenges at hand.

Among the key problems which UNMISET will need to resolve are, of course, those of supporting both the external and internal security of this new State. Before the transition whereby full responsibility for security devolves upon the East Timorese army and police, it will be essential to create conditions that rule out the possibility of any destabilization of the country undermining the attainment of independence. We believe that the passing of the baton in this area will be carried out according to an agreed timetable and without undue complications.

The second major challenge, we believe, is that of working actively with the Government of East Timor to develop an agenda for the country's long-term development so as to inculcate in the Timorese, especially the youth, a sense of confidence in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to wish success to the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General in East Timor, Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, whom we know to be both an able and ideas-oriented diplomat and an experienced and skilled organizer.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: Mr. President, I wish to welcome your presence in New York today to preside over today's meeting.

For the East Timorese people, as well as for the United Nations, today calls for joyful celebrations. After more than two and a half years of preparation, the East Timorese people have at long last gained their national independence and become a new member of the international community. President Jiang Zemin of China has already extended his warm congratulations and best wishes to the leaders and people of East Timor. China eagerly looks forward to the newborn Democratic Republic of East Timor becoming the newest Member of the United Nations.

Credit for the independence of East Timor goes first and foremost to the people of East Timor and to their perseverance, courage and reconciliatory spirit. At the same time, the role of the United Nations has also been indispensable. All through the process of the national referendum, the development of the Constitution, the presidential elections and the independence ceremony, the United Nations has played a leading role. We can safely say that without the United Nations full participation the independence process in East Timor would not have gone so smoothly.

The administrator of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), Mr. Vieira de Mello, has already handed over the key to the Government building to President Xanana Gusmão, but the outstanding contribution that UNTAET and Mr. Vieira de Mello himself have made for the smooth passage of the people of East Timor to independence will go down in the annals of East Timorese history.

The independence of East Timor marks a new stage in its national development. East Timor still has a long way to go in achieving social stability and economic development and it cannot do without assistance from the international community. The Security Council has already unanimously adopted a resolution establishing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), which is an embodiment of the wider United Nations membership's commitment to the East Timorese people. We hope and believe that UNMISET will build on the achievements of UNTAET and — under the leadership of Ambassador Sharma, the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General; in the light of changes in the situation; and on the basis of its mandate, established by a Security Council resolution — make further contributions to helping the East Timorese to consolidate their success and develop their beautiful homeland. China will actively support and contribute personnel to UNMISET.

As a close neighbour of East Timor, China has always paid close attention to its independence process. China actively participated in the work of UNTAET and, through bilateral channels, has provided assistance to East Timor within our capabilities. Upon East Timor's independence, China established formal diplomatic relations with it and provided it with new economic and technical assistance. We believe that, through joint efforts on both sides, a new chapter will be written in the history of friendly cooperation between the two countries.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): I would like to welcome you to New York, Sir, on behalf of my Government and to mention that we enjoy excellent bilateral relations with your country. It is also a pleasure for me to be here personally, since I spent almost 15 years of my career working on questions related to the South-East Asian region, serving in the region, in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. I also want to thank you for organizing this meeting. It is not every day that we get a chance to greet the first new country of the new millennium and I appreciate your joining us on this happy occasion.

On behalf of the United States Government, I join other speakers today in congratulating the East Timorese people on the occasion of their hard-won independence. East Timor's evolution over the past two and a half years, from devastation to democracy, has been truly inspiring.

The success we celebrate today is the product of contributions from many quarters and by many individuals. I want to commend Australia in particular for its leadership and the key role it played. This day also marks a signal success for the United Nations — something that the United States is delighted to recognize at this meeting. We of course especially applaud the tireless efforts of Special Representative Vieira de Mello and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Thanks to UNTAET, East Timor is on a solid footing as it joins the ranks of peace-loving nations today.

I also wish to commend all the military and civilian police personnel from Australia, Portugal and all the contributing countries that served as part of the international force in East Timor, as well as UNTAET, for their dedication and hard work in restoring stability and ensuring security in East Timor since 1999. Similarly, we recognize the legacy of good work done by the United Nations Mission in East Timor in conducting the popular consultation in 1999, which brought us to this historic point today, and we salute the memory of United Nations peacekeepers and international personnel who have given their lives.

The United States remains committed to supporting East Timor and established diplomatic relations with East Timor this morning. Our commitment to East Timor speaks for itself. Since 1999, we have contributed over $300 million towards United Nations peacekeeping in East Timor and committed nearly $180 million in bilateral assistance. Per capita, East Timor is the largest recipient of United States bilateral assistance in the world.

We look forward to working with Special Representative Sharma as he leads the next phase of United Nations involvement in East Timor. The important thing now is to consolidate gains and avoid instability. That is why the United States joined other Council members in approving, on Friday, the establishment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET). We will continue to urge the United Nations and the East Timorese to work with the widest range of bilateral donors and interested agencies as the new nation takes charge of its affairs. We will also encourage the United Nations to stay on the schedule that it has set for itself to fulfil UNMISET's mission to devolve responsibility to the Timorese people as soon as is feasible.

The Timorese can help this process by focusing on a democratic, peaceful way forward, exercising fiscal responsibility and discipline, setting realistic priorities and developing sources of income. There is much hard work ahead, but East Timor will have friends to help it. My country is one of them. The United States will continue to work with the United Nations to promote prosperity, peace and stability in newly independent East Timor. We welcome the people of East Timor at last into the community of free and democratic nations and to early membership in the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): We warmly welcome you to New York, Sir. My delegation is happy to see you presiding here at today's Council meeting as East Timor accedes to full sovereignty.

The event we celebrate today is testimony to the long and heroic march of the East Timorese people towards independence. This is a time for the United Nations and the entire international community justifiably to rejoice at this historic event. The sacrifices and suffering of the people of East Timor have finally yielded success.

My country, Guinea, which has always supported the struggle of the East Timorese people for recognition of its inalienable rights, welcomes this historic event and forthwith commits itself to enjoying cordial relations and mutually advantageous relations with that new State.

The month of May undoubtedly represents unforgettable milestones in the history of East Timor. 5 May 1999 was a starting point for the East Timorese people's process of self-determination, while 20 May 2002 enshrines its accession to independence. This is an opportunity for my delegation to pay a well-deserved tribute to all the bilateral and multilateral actors for their critical role in ensuring the positive outcome of the situation in East Timor. We thank Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and all the staff of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor for their tremendous contributions.

Today a new era opens for East Timor in which to build an independent and prosperous nation. We all recognize that the task awaiting the new authorities is immense. To meet the numerous challenges inherent in laying the foundations of a viable State, the international community's commitment is indispensable in supporting the efforts of the East Timorese people.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) to contribute to the consolidation and the strengthening of a stable environment in the country. We are pleased at the outcome of the donors meeting held in Dili on 14 and 15 May 2002. To ensure the effective follow-up of development issues, my delegation believes that it would be desirable to appoint the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as a deputy special representative of the Secretary-General. We also endorse the idea whereby assistance to East Timor would be the object of coordination among the various actors involved.

The establishment of democratic institutions is a precondition for any sustainable development. At the same time, respect for those institutions is a sine qua non for the success of any developmental programme. That responsibility lies with the head of Government and with the people of East Timor, who, as in the past, will show the political will and the determination to achieve their legitimate aspirations. We welcome the positive evolution of the relations between East Timor and its neighbours, and we urge them to place emphasis on dialogue and cooperation for peace and stability in the region.

On this memorable day, I should like to conclude by expressing to the East Timorese people my best wishes for success. We look forward to welcoming East Timor as a member of the great family of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Guinea for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): Today is a great day in the history of East Timor and in that of the United Nations as we celebrate the independence of East Timor. It is particularly significant that this meeting is taking place today under the presidency of Singapore, a country that in the Council has always shown special interest in matters concerning East Timor. My delegation is particularly happy to see you, Mr. Minister, presiding over today's meeting.

Today is the culmination of the struggle of the East Timorese people, who, with the support of the United Nations and of the international community, will, from today, begin to enjoy the fruits of freedom and independence. We congratulate the Government and the people of East Timor on this historic achievement, and we convey our best wishes to President Xanana Gusmão and to his newly sworn-in Government. Mauritius is pleased to be among the 92 countries whose dignitaries are attending the independence celebrations. We are represented by our President, Mr. Karl Offmann, on this auspicious occasion.

We all know that the East Timorese people's road to independence has not been easy. We hail the courage and resilience of the people of East Timor in their fight against all adversity. Their great courage and perseverance in rising to every challenge that has confronted them deserve to be commended. It is our sincere hope that the constitutional and administrative

structure put in place over the past two years by the international community will set out the path for the island State towards the successful establishment of a peaceful, democratic society, living in peace with its neighbours and promoting stability in the region.

We acknowledge the significant role played by the Secretary-General, both through his Special Representative and in his personal capacity. The Security Council has also been continuously engaged throughout the process leading to the statehood of East Timor, and it is important that that engagement continue in order to assist East Timor in its economic reconstruction and its nation-building process. The continued support of multilateral and bilateral donors will also be crucial for East Timor's development programmes. We would like once again to place on record our tribute to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and to the entire staff of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), whose contributions have been extremely valuable.

My delegation is confident that the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), under the able guidance of the Special Representative, Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, will maintain the momentum in the development, economic reconstruction and institution-building of East Timor. Mauritius looks forward to East Timor's becoming a member of the United Nations family very soon. We express our best wishes and our support to President Gusmão in his work to ensure the well-being of the people of East Timor and to shape their destiny.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritius for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I should like to thank you, Mr. Minister, for leading the work of the Council on this memorable day for the international community, which is witnessing the birth of a new State.

It is a great honour and a pleasure for me to convey the congratulations of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, Mr. Georgi Parvanov, to the President and the people of East Timor on the proclamation of the independence of the Democratic Republic of East Timor. This historic event is the happy outcome of the East Timorese people's long struggle for national independence. In conformity with the norms of international law and established practice, my country considers the telegram of congratulations sent by the Bulgarian President to His Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, President of East Timor, as the instrument of Bulgaria's recognition of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria endorses the statement made earlier by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union. On the occasion of this memorable event, I should like to add a few words in my national capacity.

My country highly appreciates the active role and the personal commitment of the Secretary-General in the effective coordination of the activities of the United Nations system in East Timor. My delegation thanks the Special Representative for East Timor and Transitional Administrator, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, and the team of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) for their outstanding work and dedication. I should also acknowledge the assistance provided by non-governmental organizations to the East Timorese people. The people and the leaders of East Timor undoubtedly have the principal credit for the independence of their country.

I pay tribute to the constructive participation of Portugal, to the assistance and the essential support of Australia and of New Zealand, and to the role of Indonesia and its President, Megawati Soekarnoputri, as well as to that of Japan, which have all contributed decisively to the birth of a new State. After the General Assembly's adoption of its resolution 56/282, removing East Timor from the list of non-self-governing territories, the new and sovereign State is a full-fledged member of the international community. We are convinced that, under the leadership of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) will succeed in the mandate conferred upon it by resolution 1410 (2002).

In conclusion, Bulgaria fully supports the presidential statement on East Timor to be made at the conclusion of this meeting.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): You do us honour, Sir, by presiding over the Council today. Your presence marks the special importance of today's event. Thank you for being with us.

The European Union Presidency, through Spain, made a statement earlier which the United Kingdom fully endorses, but — like the representative of Bulgaria and others — I want to add a word or two on this historic day for East Timor and for the United Nations.

We pay a first tribute to the people of East Timor for their courage and determination and for all they have achieved over the past three years. We share their satisfaction as we celebrate the birth of the century's first new independent nation with a democratically elected Government.

The United Kingdom also recognizes the hugely important role of the United Nations Mission in East Timor, the International Force in East Timor and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), and it pays tribute in particular to Sergio Vieira de Mello, whose leadership and dedication have been pivotal to the development of East Timor.

The Council has been right to pay tribute also to many other members of the Secretariat and of the peacekeeping operation on the ground. I am thinking particularly of Ian Martin, whose work in the most difficult days was very significant in helping East Timor to turn the corner. I would also like to recognize the lead role in security being played by Australia.

We all realize that the work in East Timor is not yet finished. As the Secretary-General has noted in his latest report (S/2002/432 and Add.1), there is a huge amount of work that still has to be done to establish East Timor as a stable, viable independent State. So, we welcome the continued focus of the United Nations on the country and the appointment of Kamalesh Sharma as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. His qualities are well known to all of us, and he will have the full support of the United Kingdom.

We also welcome the adoption of resolution 1410 (2002), establishing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) to continue the work of UNTAET over the next two years. We recognize that the implementation of the UNMISET mandate sets milestones which are an important element of the work that we have to do. Although the downsizing of the peacekeeping operation should take place as rapidly as the situation on the ground allows, it is important that we keep that timetable under review and make sure that East Timor remains stable.

We should not forget that there will also be an increasingly important role over the next few years for the traditional development mechanisms. In this respect, we welcome recent donor pledges of $440 million over the triennium 2002-2003 to 2004-2005, which should be sufficient to meet external financing requirements until oil and gas revenues start to come on stream.

The production of an East Timor national development plan is another positive step forward. Ruthless prioritization will be needed if the plan is to implemented effectively. Another high priority should be the establishment of a legal framework conducive to private sector investment and good governance, to preventing the spread of corruption and to addressing critical, social and economic issues, especially land tenure.

I think that the Council can be proud of its role on East Timor. The United Kingdom is pleased to have played its own part, both in our business here in New York and in our participation in the two Council missions to East Timor. We wish President Gusmão and the people of East Timor a stable and prosperous future.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Minister, we welcome you once again to New York. We thank you for honouring with your presence the New York part of East Timor's independence ceremonies. It is truly a beautiful symbol that the only member of the Security Council belonging to that region holds the Council presidency on the new country's independence day.

The representative of Spain has made a statement on behalf of the European Union; France fully endorses it. My remarks will therefore be brief.

As you have said, Mr. President, this moment is exceptional. It is a historic moment. We are gathered to celebrate the first independence of this century. East Timor has come so far in two and a half years. Long oppressed, wounded by the tragic events of September 1999, today the East Timorese nation is victorious and sovereign, reconciled with itself and at peace with its neighbours. It has finally taken its destiny in its hands. Tomorrow, as soon as possible, the Democratic

Republic of East Timor will join us, and the United Nations family will gain a one hundred ninetieth Member State.

Independence, so greatly desired and so long awaited, was achieved by the East Timorese people themselves, by their courage and extraordinary political maturity, by the outstanding qualities of their leaders: those same individuals whom the Council knows so well — Xanana Gusmão, José Ramos-Horta, Mari Alkatiri and many others. France pays tribute to them. These individuals have made history and continue to do so.

We must also welcome the role of Indonesia during this decisive period. The presence in Dili of President Megawati Soekarnoputri bears witness to the will of Indonesia to establish constructive and peaceful relations of cooperation with the new State.

As we speak, the independence celebrations are ending in Dili and throughout the territory of the new State. Everywhere, and with a remarkable unanimity, the East Timorese people have expressed their jubilation, as well as their gratitude for the impressive work accomplished by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, under the enlightened leadership of Sergio Vieira de Mello. At times, the United Nations has offered its good offices; at times it has protected; at times it has developed; at times it has administered. But rarely have all those tasks been carried out by the United Nations — in any case, never so successfully.

The support of the United Nations will not be withdrawn from the East Timorese. Its role will only be adapted. That is the mission of Mr. Kamalesh Sharma, whom we all know well and in whom we all have complete confidence. Less than in the past will it be a question of replacing the East Timorese authorities; they will have rather to be assisted. Other actors will see their role grow: the bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as the regional organizations that East Timor will now join.

The East Timorese can with full confidence pursue the implementation of the country's highest priorities: national reconciliation, economic development and the country's integration into its regional and international environment. All France's warmest wishes are addressed to them, and France will continue to lend the East Timorese its full support.

The President: I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): We are very grateful to you, Mr. Minister, for your presence with us today. It is especially fitting that Singapore should preside over our solemn deliberations today as we celebrate the independence of East Timor.

Ireland associates itself fully with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

The happy events taking place in East Timor today are ones in which Ireland is honoured to share. For all of its people, East Timor now belongs to them: a nation as well as a home. From today, it is the dreams of the people of East Timor that will shape the destiny of their country. It is their goals and achievements that will write its history.

There are many who can rightly share the credit for allowing us to reach this historic point. However, today belongs entirely to the people of East Timor. Valour and fortitude have marked, over long years, the struggles of the people of East Timor. For many years they faced a bleak and cold world. And in their valour, all of us today celebrate a victory of the human spirit and wish the people of East Timor well as a free and honoured nation.

The United Nations, too, can be proud of the positive role it has played in East Timor's story, especially in recent years. We pay warm tribute today to all the men and women who have helped and have served in United Nations missions in East Timor. The swift action of the Council in 1999 and the impeccable administration of the territory until today by the Secretary-General's Special Representative together represent an example of our Organization at its best. The resolution adopted on Friday, 17 May 2002, by the Council, establishing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, is a natural extension of this.

Today the people of East Timor face a new world as they take charge of their own affairs. The leadership that they have elected has inspired them during some of their most difficult moments. That leadership must now show the same spirit and courage that have brought East Timor to this special point. Even on an occasion such as this, we must not forget that East Timor is one of the world's poorest countries. It is graced, though, with people of great resilience and with natural

resources which, if properly exploited, can, in the medium term, help to make a better life for all.

The international community must now do all it can to help bring this about. We now have an opportunity to make a real contribution to East Timor just as it crosses the threshold of national independence. The new United Nations Mission in the country and last week's donor conference in Dili represent a good start in this regard. Ireland will play its own direct part. We have opened a Representation Office in Dili, and East Timor has been identified by Ireland's Development Aid Programme as a priority for reconstruction and rehabilitation activity.

Reconstruction and rehabilitation constitute more than a physical task, though. The establishment of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation has been an important step. We very much hope that the Commission will be able to assist the people of East Timor to achieve accountability through truth-telling and healing through reconciliation.

The establishment of good relations with its neighbours is also critical to the future development of East Timor. We encourage East Timor and Indonesia to continue their efforts to improve their important relationship. We strongly support the steps the two neighbours are taking in this regard, including the recent meeting in Jakarta between President Megawati Soekarnoputri and President Gusmão. We welcome President Megawati Soekarnoputri's attendance at today's independence ceremonies.

The independence of East Timor represents the arrival of the first new State of the twenty-first century. We look forward to welcoming East Timor to its place among the Member States of the United Nations. Ultimate responsibility for its destiny as an independent nation lies in the hands of its people and those they choose as their leaders. We in the international community also have a great responsibility and interest in ensuring that East Timor can fulfil its potential. We owe no less to the people of East Timor. Ireland wishes the new nation well and pledges to continue to offer our strong support in the tasks that lie ahead.

Ms. Lajous (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to express the Mexican delegation's deep appreciation for your presence here, Sir, as you preside over this Security Council meeting, which highlights the importance that the Government of Singapore attaches to its representation on the Security Council. I also wish to convey the joy of the people and Government of Mexico to the new Government at the birth of East Timor as an independent State.

Wishing to be with them on this special date, a high-level Mexican delegation, led by the Deputy Foreign Minister, Ambassador Miguel Marín Bosch, travelled to Dili to attend the Independence Day ceremony on behalf of the President of Mexico, Mr. Vicente Fox. The willingness of the Government of Mexico to strengthen the relations of friendship and cooperation with East Timor was conveyed in Dili.

Mexico welcomes this transcendental moment in East Timor's history, the culminating point in the struggle of a people to exercise its right to self-determination. Mexico reiterates once again its high esteem of the United Nations for its dedication to the attainment of East Timor's independence, which will remain on record as one of the successful chapters in the history of this Organization.

Today we joyfully welcome the Democratic Republic of East Timor to the community of nations. The people and the authorities of East Timor have expressed their wish to participate actively and constructively in the international system. We await the time when the Council can make the recommendation to the General Assembly to accept East Timor as a new Member State of this Organization.

I wish to express my country's support for the readiness shown by the new authorities of East Timor to sign and to ratify the principal international treaties, particularly those on disarmament, the environment and human rights. We also particularly welcome the statement made in this Chamber by young José Cabral on the occasion of the special session on children to the effect that one of the first international instruments that the new Government of East Timor will sign will be the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including its Optional Protocols.

The people and the Government of East Timor have an enormous task before them: the consolidation of basic structures and of public and private social and community institutions, to respond to political, economic and social development needs. We are deeply gratified at the beginning of the work of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, the conclusion of the phase of emergency rehabilitation in the education sector and progress in the creation of

health infrastructure in the country. We are also gratified by the adoption of domestic labour legislative aimed at the implementation of relevant international standards.

The efforts of the new Government of East Timor to respond to the needs of its population in the priority areas of education, health, housing and agriculture require the sustained support of the international community. This will contribute to the country's economic and social development, will alleviate poverty and will contribute to the effective exercise of independence and self-determination by the people of East Timor.

The $360 million pledge made during the donors' conference recently held in Dili augurs well for the future.

The United Nations also has a responsibility to fulfil in the consolidation of the newly independent State. Cognizant of this, Mexico supported the adoption of Security Council resolution 1410 (2002) last Friday. This resolution establishes the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), which is provided with an appropriate mandate to contribute to the establishment of a representative and solid administration, to the rule of law and order and to external security.

It is now the Security Council's task appropriately to follow up the implementation of the resolution and to support UNMISET and its head, Kamalesh Sharma, in the implementation of their mandate. We will closely follow the progress made in the field in order to adapt the composition and the mandate of the Mission as needed, ensuring the gradual hand-over of responsibilities and powers to the people of East Timor in all spheres.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Welcome, Mr. President, Minister-Professor Jayakumar, to this celebratory meeting of the Security Council. Your presence here among us today confirms the serious approach that Singapore has taken to the consideration of this subject.

We extend a warm welcome to the people of East Timor, to its President, Xanana Gusmão, to José Ramos-Horta and to the United Nations as a whole on the birth of this new State. We express our hopes and our best wishes today for the prosperity, the harmony and the unity of the Timorese people.

Colombia is proud to be a member of the Security Council, and we share the satisfaction of having contributed to the collective effort of ensuring that the fundamental principle of self-determination of peoples is a reality in East Timor.

We support the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the members of the Rio Group. We commend the fine work of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), including of course, that of Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello and all of his staff. It would be difficult to enumerate the successes of this United Nations participation in the establishment of a public administration, the training of local personnel, the creation of local capacities, the carrying out of reconstruction and development tasks, the rehabilitation of the physical and social infrastructure and the provision of social services, as well as the launching of the new Constitution and the holding of elections.

We recognize the good diplomatic and trade relations that East Timor is beginning to build with its neighbours. We are delighted at the substantive progress made in normalizing relations with Indonesia and, in addition, we recognize the role of Australia and Japan in the entire process of self-determination and the creation of the economic conditions that can ensure the progress of this new State. We also want to mention the constant activities of the Government of Portugal in this regard.

In celebrating the past, which has culminated in the independence of East Timor, we join those who express their caution about the future. The elimination of extreme poverty, the creation of sources of sustainable economic resources, the strengthening of institutions, the consolidation of democracy, access to international markets and the attraction of direct foreign investment are some of the challenges that will have to be met by the new autonomous Government. We trust that in a few years, when we evaluate the success of the administration that is beginning today, we will also be examining with a critical eye the attitude and the commitment of the international community towards this new State, including the donor community. We also underscore, as a special challenge, the protection of the role of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, as a mechanism for reconciliation and justice. It is fundamental to know the truth regarding violations of human rights that

occurred between 1974 and 1999 and to support the reintegration of those guilty of minor offences through community-based mechanisms, as was mentioned in the recent report of the Secretary-General.

The United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), established by resolution 1410 (2002) of 17 May, will have important work to accomplish in the next two years, contributing to the consolidation and the stability of the new State. We reiterate our confidence that, under the leadership of Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma, UNMISET will gradually be able to transfer all operational responsibilities to the authorities of East Timor through an ongoing process of evaluation and monitoring.

As a Security Council member, it will be our pleasure and our honour to consider and to support East Timor's request to be admitted as a full-fledged member of the United Nations.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Mr. President, first of all I would like to welcome you here to New York where you are presiding over this very important meeting. Like others, I would also like to congratulate the Democratic Republic of East Timor on its independence. It has been a long and difficult struggle and, at the dawn of a new millennium, we are pleased to welcome the birth of a new nation and, soon, a new member of this Organization.

Today we witness the results of the political maturity shown by the East Timorese people in choosing to support democracy and reconciliation as a basis for their nation. We also witness the results of the impressive leadership of the East Timorese interim authorities and of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Sergio Vieira de Mello. I would like in particular to express Norway's appreciation for the outstanding manner in which Mr. Vieira de Mello has headed the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) since 1999 and to commend the Mission for the excellent work it has undertaken. I would also like to wish Ambassador Kamalesh Sharma success in his assignment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for East Timor. Allow me also to express our appreciation to the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Portugal for their cooperation with the United Nations and their support for the process towards independence for East Timor.

Over the last years, Norway has developed a special and close relationship with the East Timorese people, and we have great admiration for the courage, commitment and energy of President Gusmão and Nobel Prize laureates Ramos-Horta and Bishop Belo. For many years, they were a beacon of hope for the East Timorese people in their struggle for peace and independence.

Norway will do its utmost to foster and further develop our excellent relations. We welcome the adoption of resolution 1410 (2002), establishing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), and affirm the generous commitment of the donor community at the Consultative Group meeting in Dili last week.

As the structures and institutions of the new State develop, and as UNMISET gradually phases out, the framework for long-term development assistance must be put in place.

My Government is a firm supporter of East Timor. As stated at the donors' meeting in Oslo last December and repeated last week in Dili, Norway remains committed to supporting East Timor financially and politically, also after independence. The Norwegian Minister for International Development, Ms. Hilde Johnson, attended the events in Dili of the past few days. During her stay she signed a memorandum of understanding with the East Timorese on future cooperation, which, in accordance with East Timor's own national development strategy, will focus mainly on health, education, good governance and sustainability in the management of natural resources. This year, our assistance to East Timor will amount to approximately $5.9 million.

Let me once again congratulate East Timor on its independence. Norway wishes the new nation success in its aspirations towards building a democratic, stable and prosperous State.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Singapore. Several speakers before me have noted that Singapore is situated in South-East Asia and is one of East Timor's neighbours. Singapore is, therefore, particularly pleased to join all others who have spoken in this Chamber in celebrating, together with the people of East Timor and the international community, the independence of East Timor, which came into effect just a few hours ago. Given the lateness of the hour, I

do not intend to read the entire text of the statement, which has been circulated, but let me just summarize these key points.

First, it is only right that the leaders and people of East Timor should be commended and congratulated, first and foremost. They have chosen their destiny and displayed fortitude and resilience in the face of adversity to achieve it. From restoring peace and stability to building public administration capacities, helping refugees return to reviving the economy, the leaders and people of East Timor have worked hand-in-hand with the United Nations with much success. Their efforts have paid off. The new nation of East Timor has been born.

Secondly, at the dawn of this new being, the East Timor leaders have taken the reins of Government with enthusiasm. The people have shown their readiness to work with the democratically elected Government. In one of the widest consultative processes seen anywhere, almost 40,000 East Timorese, covering virtually every *suco*, or village, in the country were consulted. The end result was a list of challenges that East Timor faces and has to address head-on — from education and health to agriculture and the economy, to helping the poor and national unity.

Thirdly, it is clear from the national development plan that the leaders and people of East Timor recognize that independence is only the start of another long and difficult journey. But they have incisively come up with a national vision that will guide them on this arduous voyage. They have great leaders in Mr. Xanana Gusmão, Mr. Mari Alkatiri and Mr. José Ramos-Horta to guide them. Singapore shares the confidence that the Security Council and the wider United Nations membership have in the East Timor Government and people. We wish them all the best in their quest to build a democratic, stable and viable State.

Fourthly, even as they embark on this quest, the East Timorese cannot go it on their own just yet. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said in its latest report that East Timor, having a population of more than 700,000 people, is Asia's poorest nation with an annual per capita gross domestic product of $478. Sustained international assistance to bolster the country's efforts is not only essential, but also paramount, during East Timor's early years of nationhood.

The United Nations system, Member States, and non-governmental organizations have played an important role in the last two and a half years to bring East Timor to where it is today. Their efforts are laudable, and should be applauded. Special tribute must certainly go to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his personal efforts and his Special Representative Sergio Vieira de Mello for the outstanding work that he had done together with his team in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). The contributions of Member States to UNTAET should also receive special mention. For East Timor to succeed, the support of the United Nations and the international community will continue to be crucial.

Fifthly, the future of East Timor is also inextricably linked to the future of the region. Good relations between East Timor and its neighbours are therefore crucial. The commitment of East Timor to build strong and robust ties with Indonesia is therefore very much welcomed. So, too, is Indonesia's readiness to cooperate with East Timor towards building a peaceful, unified and sustainable society. The visit of Mr. Xanana Gusmão to Jakarta earlier this month to meet President Megawati and other Indonesian leaders and the attendance of President Megawati at East Timor's independence ceremony are very positive signs of the maturing relationship between the two countries.

Finally, in conclusion, let me emphasize that the people of East Timor have made huge sacrifices. The United Nations has made great efforts to restore peace to that territory. The international community has made massive investments in the country. All of us, therefore, have a responsibility, if not an obligation, to make East Timor a real success story. We should not accept anything less. We must run the full course.

We have at this meeting welcomed East Timor into the community of nations. We must now look forward with eagerness to East Timor joining the United Nations family in the not-too-distant future.

I now resume my function as President of the Security Council. I wish to say that following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council welcomes the attainment of independence by East Timor on 20 May 2002, which marks the culmination of a process of self-determination and transition that

began in May 1999. The Council pays tribute to the people and leadership of East Timor for their efforts in achieving the goal of independence.

"The Security Council affirms its commitment to the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity of East Timor within its internationally recognized boundaries.

"The Security Council takes this opportunity to express its deep appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, and notes with satisfaction the role played by the United Nations in restoring peace to East Timor, and in building a solid foundation for a democratic, viable and stable East Timor. The Council commends the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) for the important work that it has done to achieve these important goals.

"The Security Council expresses its strong support for the leadership of East Timor as it assumes authority for governing the new, sovereign State of East Timor. The Council recognizes that the people and democratically elected Government of East Timor bear the ultimate responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of a viable State. It expresses its confidence that the people and leadership of East Timor will demonstrate the necessary political will and determination to fulfil their aspirations.

"The Security Council appreciates the efforts made by the General Assembly and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples towards East Timor's achievement of independence. The Council expresses its appreciation to the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Portugal for their cooperation with the United Nations in concluding the 5 May 1999 Agreement which led to the establishment of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) to conduct the popular consultation. It also expresses its appreciation to Australia and all other countries that contributed troops to the International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) and the UNTAET, which helped restore stability following the post-referendum violence.

"The Security Council welcomes the Government of East Timor's commitment to develop close and strong relations with Indonesia, and the Government of Indonesia's stated readiness to cooperate with East Timor towards building a peaceful, unified and sustainable society in East Timor. The Council stresses that good relations with neighbouring States will be essential to East Timor's future stability and that of the region, which are inextricably linked.

"The Security Council is concerned that challenges to the security and stability of East Timor remain after independence. It notes with concern that shortcomings exist in a number of critical public administration elements of East Timor in the post-independence period. The Council reaffirms that a strong international commitment will be required in East Timor to ensure continued stability and development of the country for some time after independence. The Council expresses its confidence that the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), established through resolution 1410 (2002) on 17 May 2002, will help consolidate and strengthen a stable environment in East Timor.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of complementing the United Nations peacekeeping contribution with other United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, international financial institutions, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations to assist the people of East Timor to develop a sustainable social system and economy. It also reaffirms the continued need for effective and close coordination among these programmes and donors to ensure a smooth transition towards a normal development assistance framework. The Council appeals to Member States to respond positively to the urgent appeal of the Secretary-General to fill vacancies in the Civilian Support Group. It also urges Member States and other actors to respond positively to the appeals for assistance in the development of the East Timor defence force, police service and justice sector; and in supporting social and economic development and poverty reduction.

"The Security Council looks forward to the day in the near future when East Timor will join us as a Member of the United Nations and to

working closely with its representatives. The Council notes that the East Timor Government today submitted a letter to the Secretary-General requesting the admission of East Timor as a Member of the United Nations.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2002/13.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.